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The chelik are amused

[frontispiece]

~~OCU~~ THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

[p. i]

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Baiga
The Agaria
Maria Murder and Suicide
Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal
Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh
Myths of Middle India
(in the press)
Tribal Art of Middle India
(in the press)

WITH SHAMRAO HIVALE

Songs of the Forest
Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills

THE MURIA
AND
THEIR GHOTUL

VERRIER ELWIN

INDIAN BRANCH
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

800

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, LONDON, E.C. 4
EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
PUBLISHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY

First published 1947

Printed in India by Norman A. Ellis
at the Baptist Mission Press, 41A Lower Circular Road, Calcutta, and published by
Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Bombay

TO

000 JEHANGIR P. PATEL

000 Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

—St Paul

For thousands of years human folly has overwhelmed love with debris, pelted love with filth. To liberate love from this is to restore that vital human value which among all human values stands supreme.

—Hirschfeld

The concealment of truth is the only indecorum known to science; and to keep anything secret within its cold and passionless expanse would be as prudish as to throw a cloth round a naked statue.

—Westermarck

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is the ghotul, the village dormitory, the
bothie, the bachelors' hall—*Jünglingshaus* is an attractive German 121
word used recently by Ruben—of the Muria of Bastar State. 883
Similar institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures, though none have been studied in sufficient detail for full comparison. But on the existing evidence it seems probable that the Bastar ghotul is one of the most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. For what is a village guardroom for the Naga, a boys' club among the Uraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

The study of an institution that is related functionally to every aspect of a tribe's life presents certain technical difficulties of presentation. The culture pattern must be developed in due order; but this means that there will be many references in the earlier chapters that can only be explained later on. A book of this kind, where everything fits in, which describes a culture that is integrated and intelligible, has to be read in bulk—as it were—rather than in sequence. For the reader's convenience, therefore, I give here a brief introductory account of the ghotul in the light of which Part I must be read.

The Muria ghotul is an institution, tracing its origin to Lingo Pen, a famous 883
cult-hero of the Gond, of which all the unmarried boys and girls of the tribe must be members. This membership is carefully organized; after a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries with it a graded rank and social duties. Leaders are appointed to organize and discipline the society; throughout this book I call the boys' leader the Sirdar and the girls' leader the Belosa. Boy members are known as chelik and girl members as motiari. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul to which they belong. Two distinct types of organization are recognized. In the older, classical, type of ghotul, boys and girls pair off in a more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage. They are often 'married' and cohabit in the dormitory for several years. In the more modern form of ghotul, such exclusive associations are forbidden and partners must constantly be changed.

Chelik and motiari have important duties to perform on all social occasions. The boys act as acolytes at festivals, the girls as bridesmaids at weddings. Both dance before the clan-god and at the great fairs. They form a choir at the funerals of important people. Their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the crushing monotony that is its normal characteristic in other parts of India.

The intimate association of the ghotul with every aspect of Muria life means, of course, that we must study the whole of that life in less or greater detail. The ghotul must be put in its place. For this reason I have divided the book into two Parts. Part I gives the setting and background, Part II describes the life of the chelik and motiari in detail.

In Part I, I begin with a description of the geopolitical background of the 128
tribe, and give a brief account of the three elements that compose it—the Jhoria, who are Hill Maria now settled in the plains, the Muria immigrants from the north, and the very old aboriginal population of eastern Kondagaon. In Chapter II, I describe the economic life of the Muria; the ghotul is only a night club; all day its members are engrossed in the quest for food and drink. The chelik are kept busy in both axe- and plough-cultivation, hunting, fishing,

gathering honey, tapping the sago-palm, collecting fuel. The motiari not only work very hard at home, but they go out for roots, wild fruit and myrabolams, to pick broad leaves for plates, cups and pipes, to fish and to express oil.

Chapter III describes the organization of the tribe by clans and families, a matter of absorbing interest to the chelik and motiari since it controls their relations with one another and directs their ultimate matrimonial alliances. I then give three chapters to discussing the course of Muria life, and take the reader right through a Muria's history from birth to death. It was difficult to decide where to put the long and rather tedious chapter on the marriage ceremonies, but I finally decided to put it here rather than in Part II where it would have unduly disturbed the sequence of my argument. This section, though tedious enough, is of great importance, for throughout it the ghotul members are in the centre of the stage and are rarely seen to better advantage.

Chapters VII and VIII describe Muria religion and mythology. The ghotul system derives from and is vitalized by the legend of Lingo Pen, which I discuss in the greatest detail. The dormitory is itself a shrine protected by supernatural forces and full of uncanny power; I show how intimately it is connected with the religious life of the tribe.

We are now in a position to turn to the main subject of the book—the ghotul itself. Chapter IX discovers many parallels to the Bastar institution in other cultures and suggests reasons for its origin; one of the most interesting of these is the Muria's desire to prevent his children from witnessing 'the primal scene'. This leads to an account of the relations of parents and children. I then describe the ghotul buildings, the different types of ghotul organization, ceremonies of initiation and the appointment of leaders, and in Chapter XIII I give a typical evening in the ghotul according to its jealously preserved procedure. Other chapters deal with dress and fashions, dreams, games and dances, riddles and folk-tales.

In Chapter XVI, I describe frankly, but I trust without offence, the ghotul's attitude to sex, and in the following chapter attempt a solution of the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity. Final chapters attempt to relate the ideas of this remarkable institution to the tribe's attitude to marriage and morality.

It is little wonder that the Muria should regard their ghotul with passionate and loyal devotion. The word so often used to describe it, *parmakoro* or *parmanghor*, 'lovely as the horns of bison', reveals its tender and romantic associations. Its joys are celebrated in a score of songs.

Pupal husir bida he dewa,   Good as the taste of *urad* pulse,
Laya ra udna bida helo.   So was your life with the chelik, sister.

The road leading to its door is like a jackal's tail; the first ghotul had a roof of peacock feathers and a door of ogre's bones. It was 'beautiful as a horse's throat'. If a Muria wants to describe water that is fresh and sparkling, he calls it *chelik sundar pāni*, 'water beautiful as a chelik'.

My chapters on life in the ghotul will probably be of greater interest to the general reader, but throughout the book I have tried to find the synthesis of the whole culture, to see Muria life as a coherent living entity, as a thing logical, dignified and beautiful. In every investigation of a civilization not one's own, there comes—usually only after months or years of routine investigation, tedious checking and the patient accumulation of facts—a moment of sudden glory when one sees everything fall into place, when the colours of the pattern are revealed, and one finds oneself no longer an alien and an outsider, but within.

It is easier to reach this point among the Muria than in other tribes, for Muria life revolves round the ghotul and the problem is thus simplified. I doubt indeed if the ghotul could exist in another kind of society, a society less free from rivalry and competition, less subject to jealousy, less gentle and tolerant. It could not, I think, be a feature of a disintegrating tribal society; if the ghotul should disappear, we should know that the Muria had begun the long descent to degradation and collapse that has affected many Indian tribes. At present Muria culture and society is complete, close-knit, organized, loyal to itself; the Muria has a full and happy life; and a great part of his unity and happiness depends on the ghotul. There has never been official interference in his religion and culture; the reformer and missionary have been kept far from him. For he has the advantage of living under an administration that has been conducted for many years by officials with scholarship, sympathy and imagination, and his life has been little disturbed, except—as we shall see—by occasional travellers and subordinates.

To the outsider, whether he be a subordinate official, a wandering merchant or a casual visitor to the State, the most important thing about the ghotul, the thing that at once arouses his sniggering curiosity and excitement—is the sexual relation between chelik and motiari. It is probably true to say that many people who live all their lives among the Muria hardly ever realize that the sexual relation is secondary and the magical, religious and social aspects of ghotul life predominant in the Muria's mind. I hope that no one will put down this book without reading, if he reads nothing else, the chapter on 'Moral Standards in the Ghotul'; he will then see that his suspicions of the ghotul as a place of sexual licence are unfounded. If there is licence there is also taboo; if youth has freedom it moves on into a life of strictest decorum. Muria life may be described as having in its pre-nuptial period many of the features of Huxley's *Brave New World*, but in its post-nuptial period the atmosphere of the poems of Tennyson.

But there is, of course, a simple, sensuous and passionate sex-life in the ghotul, and I have described it fully. As it still seems necessary to justify such freedom of description, I will quote the words of two great scholars which, with the quotations that I have put at the beginning of the book, should surely be enough to satisfy all but the most unintelligent. The Rev. E. W. Smith is one of the greatest of African missionaries and was for many years Literary Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. His book on the Ba-ila is a model of scientific research. On the subject of the relations of the sexes, he writes,

> There is much that is unpleasant in this part of our subject—much that we would fain pass over in silence. But if we are to be faithful to our purpose to give a true picture of the Ba-ila, we must not dwell upon what R. L. Stevenson called 'the prim, obliterated, polite surface of life', but must lay bare 'the broad, bawdy and orgiastic—or maenadic—foundations'. To write of the Ba-ila and omit all reference to sex would be like writing of the sky and leaving out the sun; for sex is the most pervasive element of their life. It is the atmosphere into which the children are brought. Their early years are largely a preparation for the sexual function; during the years of maturity it is their most ardent pursuit, and old age is spent in vain and disappointing endeavours to continue it. Sex overtowers all else. . . We desire to look at even these things from their point of view. Our object is not to hold them

128 up to reprobation, but simply to describe and understand. To them, the union of the sexes is on the same plane as eating and drinking, to be indulged in without stint on every possible occasion.[1]

Among the Muria, where sex is regarded as something much higher than eating and drinking and the technique of love has been developed to an almost ideal level, it is obviously still more necessary that we should study this subject. To such a study we may also apply wise words of Malinowski.

> In anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making.[2]

114 The neglect of the village dormitory as a subject of research, not only in Bastar but throughout the world, is astonishing.[3] In English, Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* deals only with the men's houses from which women are rigorously omitted. In German there is the standard work by Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* on age-groups and men's societies, a study by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Das Junggesellenhaus im Westlichen Hinterindien*,[4] on the social functions of the dormitories in Further India, and a chapter in *Völker und Kulturen* by Schmidt and Koppers which deals with age-grades and the social functions of the dormitories. For the institution as maintained by specific tribes, we have hints and scattered details in many books, but full-dress accounts are rare. In India the most detailed are C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's on the Konyak Naga and S. C. Roy's on the Uraon. In Africa Leakey has given some valuable information about the intimate life in the *manyatta* of the Masai, and Malinowski has an illuminating account of the Trobriand *bukumatula*. But compared to what might have been written on so fascinating and important a subject comparatively little has yet been attempted.

Moreover the great museums of ethnographic fact also ignore the subject. There is only a passing reference in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* to the institution, though one would have thought it highly relevant to his discussion of the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity. Briffault is equally silent, so is Frazer. Nor does Unwin, in a book largely devoted to a study of pre-nuptial chastity, *Sex and Culture*, pay any attention to the evidence (scanty enough, yet of great importance) from the village dormitory. Hambly, in his *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, mentions the dormitory, but hardly accords it its rightful place as one of the most powerful agents of primitive education. Havelock Ellis would, I think, have found much to interest him in the sexual relations of the boys and girls of primitive societies, but he too seems to have considered the existing literature as lacking in detail and authority. 114

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[1] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 36.

[2] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. xlv.

[3] Long ago Peal noticed the same thing. 'The paucity of references to the Morong in many standard works relating to the Indo-Pacific region, is most extraordinary.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 255.

[4] In *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Vol. I (1930). I owe the references to the continental literature to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

Yet—as a glance at this book will show—the ghotul, and presumably the village dormitory elsewhere, provides the most important evidence for any discussion on group-marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, pre-nuptial infertility, experimental marriage, the union of near kin and the value of the rules of exogamy. For the general reader, uninterested in technical anthropological problems, the ghotul raises equally interesting questions about co-education, the influence of punishment, the expediency of marriage between those who have grown up together, the relegation of parental responsibility, the relation of discipline and freedom, and the elimination of jealousy. It opens up the widest problems of sex and marriage; and even though Muria society may not provide solutions, it does at least put the questions.

The ghotul does not yield up its secrets readily. It is easy enough to obtain a superficial knowledge of its organization, but the Muria have no conscience at all about misleading the inquirer, and it is almost routine for them to give incorrect information at first. They invariably deny—if you ask them questions—that chelik and motiari have intimate relations; they told Grigson that girls never slept in the ghotul of the Narayanpur Tahsil; I have often been wearied by their lies. Every statement must be weighed and checked; the anthropologist has to be both a detective and a magistrate; he must be ready to follow the slightest clue, but he must test with the greatest care the evidence that is put before him. 123

We must not blame the Muria for their reticence. It is the natural and proper barrier set up against prying eyes; it is their ultimate refuge against the inroads of civilization. Moreover chelik and motiari are bound to secrecy, to conceal everything not only from the stranger but from their own relatives, when they are admitted to the ghotul fellowship.

How then was it possible to gather the vast amount of detailed information presented in this book? The answer is simple; the Muria cannot resist affection. They are the most friendly people in the world—once you have learnt how to set about them. They immediately respond to respect. For years they have been scolded, peered at, ridiculed by every visitor to their villages; their first reaction to a newcomer is naturally to throw up a barrier of reticence and falsehood. But directly they find that the visitor knows something about them and likes what he knows, there is a wonderful change and he is overwhelmed with intimacies.

I first visited the Muria country in 1935, and repeated my visits for several years till 1942. In 1940 I was appointed Census Officer of Bastar State and a little later Honorary Ethnographer with the status of a Head of a Department—a position that greatly facilitated my inquiries. In an Appendix I give a list of all the ghotul in the State, and note those that I visited personally and what I saw. I have also recorded those which I was not able to visit myself, but about which I believe I have exact and authentic information—information collected by more than one of my colleagues and which has stood the test of check and counter-check. It seems to me essential that an ethnographer should present his credentials in as precise a manner as possible and should confess his failures. I must admit, for example, that I have not lived in the Muria area during the rains. I have personally witnessed, however, at least samples of everything described in the book, and the total number of ghotul visited comes to no fewer than 347. 114

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

124 I have always been annoyed by the use of the words 'always', 'commonly', 'universally', 'rarely' in anthropological literature, and even though I have used them often enough myself, I have longed for more precision of statement. This dissatisfaction drove me to prepare a questionnaire about some of those matters on which Westermarck and Briffault, for example, make their most confident assertions. I decided that out of a population of a little over 100,000, a sample of 2,000 cases would not be regarded as insufficient even by mathematicians. I had forms printed at the Jagdalpur Press and questions were asked by members of my party under my close supervision. I believe that the results of this inquiry are among the most valuable conclusions of this book. There must always be a margin of error, but on the whole I believe that a high degree of accuracy has been obtained. It is possible, I know, to lie convincingly by statistics more easily than by any other method, but in the realm of social anthropology I must confess to a great feeling of relief, when instead of having to say, for example, 'The institution of the marriage by service (Lamhada) is not very common' I can observe that 'Out of 2,000 cases examined only 113 were Lamhada'.

000 All the photographs in this book were taken by me except Plates LIX–LXV which were given me by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (my own Bondo and Gadaba pictures were not ready in time) and Plate CV which was made specially by Mr F. Berko from specimens collected by Mr Shamrao Hivale. I used a Contax camera with a 5 cm. Sonnar lens for ordinary work and an 8·5 cm. Triotar for long-distance and close-ups. Developing and enlargements were done by Messrs Kodak, Bombay, whose staff showed great interest in my work and at all times gave me every consideration.

With a few exceptions (Figs. 123-4, 127–9) all the line-drawings in the text are by Mr R. F. Motofram, for whose work I cannot sufficiently express my admiration and who is responsible not only for the drawings but also for the beautiful colour-plates and for some improvements in the half-tones. Most of the drawings were made from specimens collected by me and taken down to Bombay, but Figs. 20, 22, 30, 44, 45 and 46 were drawn from my own photographs, Fig. 28 from a photograph given me by Mr G. F. Ramsden, C.I.E., I.C.S., and Fig. 40 from a photograph by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Figs. 34–9, 41, 76, 116 and 137 were copied from books and journals; acknowledgements will be found in the text.

It was A. E. Housman's ambition that one day a copy of *The Shropshire Lad* taken into battle should stop a bullet aimed at a soldier's heart. I have a similar desire for this, as for all my other books, that in the battle for existence which the Indian aboriginal now has to wage, it may protect him from some of the deadly shafts of exploitation, interference and repression that civilization so constantly launches at his heart. If this book does anything to help the Muria to continue as they are today, happy, free and innocent, I shall be content.

V.E.

Patangarh Village
Mandla District, India
11 July 1942

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN preparation of a book of this kind the ethnographer requires the help of many friends. First and foremost among these was Shamrao Hivale, since 1928 my constant companion, supporter and consoler. He accompanied me on my first visit to Bastar in 1935 and afterwards went with me on many of my tours. His genius for friendship with aboriginals and his ability to catch the essential imponderabilia of primitive life (which is admirably displayed in his book *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley*) was invaluable, and this book owes to him much of its life and colour and some of the important 'documents' were due to his friendliness and enterprise.

It was Mr W. V. Grigson, C.S.I., I.C.S., who first directed my attention to the ghotul by his account of it in a report of the 1931 Census. Subsequent inquiries have shown that some of his facts only apply to the particular ghotul he examined and at that date. But he put me on the road. His book on the Maria Gond was in my hands every day for three years and today its torn and dilapidated condition is a tribute to the value I have always put on it. Throughout the writing of this book and its production, Mr Grigson's friendship and support, and his unparalleled affection for Bastar and its people, have been a constant inspiration.

After Mr Grigson had inspired me with an interest in Bastar, Mr E. S. Hyde, I.C.S. (who was then Administrator), got me there. Mr Hyde was succeeded by Mr A. N. Mitchell, O.B.E., I.C.S., a man who belongs properly to an earlier generation of officials, to the spacious days of Grierson and Crooke, for he has managed to combine his desire to gain justice for the underdog with a high tradition of scholarship. He is the author of a *Grammar of Gondi* and he has made substantial contributions, which are acknowledged in the text, to this book on the linguistic side.

In February 1941, Mr Walter Kaufmann, who was then working in All-India Radio, spent a week with me investigating the music of the Maria and Muria. There could be no one better qualified for the task, and I count myself most fortunate in being able to include his recordings of ghotul songs and the rhythms of Muria drumming.

In March of the following year, Dr B. S. Guha, the doyen of Indian anthropologists and most delightful of travelling companions, visited me in Bastar and we went together to Dongrigura in the east and Markabera in the west. Dr Guha made a number of measurements and has generously allowed me to print his conclusions.

In Bastar itself I had so many helpers that I cannot name them all, but I must at least mention the then Assistant Administrator, the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, who contributed notes on Bastar religion; my friend Mr S. M. Ishaque, Assistant Settlement Officer, whose practical help and wide knowledge of the people of Bastar was always at my disposal; Mr D. A. Dubois who made things easy for me in his office and cheered me in his home; Mr Ramakrishnan, who rescued me from many difficulties while I was Census Officer and has since shown his interest in my ethnographic work; the late Mr Qudratalla Khan, Excise Officer, who prepared me a valuable note on the use of liquor in the State; Mr A. C. Mayberry, M.B.E., and the whole of his police staff, especially Thakur Manbahal Singh, who has an unusual knowledge of the Muria and sympathy for their institutions; Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E., who helped to keep me fit through many arduous journeys, and the great-hearted

Dr K. Satyanarayan, who saved the life of my son and gave constant help to members of my party. Every Tahsildar gave me help in my various inquiries, but for this book I owe a special debt to Mr T. R. Menon (since Diwan of Nilgiri State) and Mr Q. Huq who were stationed in the northern area while I was living among the Muria.

Then there was Mr Sampat Singh who was lent me by the State for two years, a man with a remarkable command of the Gondi language, a wide knowledge of the Bastar aboriginals, and a deep sympathy for their culture. He had some training from Mr Grigson several years before and soon became adept in creating a friendly and confident atmosphere. He nearly always accompanied me on my tours.

My trained assistants, Sundarlal and Gulabdas, may now be regarded as very efficient and trustworthy investigators. They usually went ahead of the main party to explore. It was only after they had made friends with a village and prepared the way that the rest of us would go there. Sometimes they reported hostility or indifference and we would change our programme. Unhappily Sunderlal twice fell very ill in Bastar and had to return home. Gulabdas also suffered constantly from malaria, but his almost passionate devotion to the Muria kept him going. His knowledge of Bastar has astonished residents and officials of many years' standing.

Another member of the party was Dhanuram, an educated Muria who was lent to me by the Settlement Department. He is an Usendi of northern Antagarh, and I believe that he is by origin a Hill Maria. He is a good and faithful person who quickly learnt that nothing was required of him but fact. It was his special task—since he was a Gondi-speaking Muria—to write down the songs and stories in original and help me to translate them. Buchul is a Gondi-speaking Pardhan from Mandla who did a few months' good work and would have done more had he not suffered from the usual Pardhan objection to exerting himself. My chaprasis, Tularam—a Dhakar—and Manglu—a Bhattra—were also helpful in creating a friendly atmosphere and in banishing suspicion.

The Gondi texts which, it must be remembered, are in a corrupt Muria-Gondi, with the translations, are due mainly to the work of Mr Sampat Singh and Dhanuram. Mr A. N. Mitchell also checked many of the songs.

I have left to the last the help given by my wife, who is herself a Gond and was believed by the Muria to be a Maria with the result that I was known generally as the 'Maria Sahib'. To get information from the motiari's point of view was almost impossible for a party of men; Kosi filled the gap and obtained some unique experiences from her friends in the ghotul—into which, however, to her great annoyance she was not allowed, as a married woman, to enter. My son came to the Muria country when he was only a fortnight old and was indeed conceived in the shadow of the ghotul. He played his part in the creation of this book as an object of admiring excitement to one and all. I had a gramophone, and mechanical toys, and there were always many presents, but nothing 'drew' as he did. He has since played a similar part in the wildest hills of Orissa, among Juang and Bhuiya, Gadaba and Kond, and was nowhere more successful than among the fierce and untamed Bondo.

I must also thank Mr H. J. B. Le Patourel, Diwan of Jashpur State, for an account of the Dhumkuria within his administration; Mr K. C. Seth, Census Officer of Kanker State, for a statistical record of the ghotul across the Bastar border; Mr H. V. Blackburn, who first escorted me to the Kuttia Kond hills; and above all Mr W. G. Archer, I.C.S., who enabled me to see something of the remnants of dormitory culture among the Ho, Munda,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Asur and Uraon, whose own work has been a perpetual source of inspiration to me, and who found time to go carefully through my MS and make suggestions that have improved it.

Others who read the MS and involved me in endless labour of rewriting (to the benefit both of the book and my own soul) were Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Mr Evelyn Wood and Mr Denys Scott. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf is one of those scholars whose learning is equalled by his generosity; his assistance has at all times been unstinted, and I have always found it wise to follow his advice.

Few books can have been scrutinized more carefully or criticized more drastically than the first draft of this book during the rains of 1941 at Morfa House, then the home of Evelyn and Maeve Wood in Bombay. They not only studied the MS themselves and discussed it in the greatest detail, but arranged gatherings in their house where I was able to read parts of it to a group of scientists and get their criticisms. Among those who helped in these discussions were Sir S. S. Sokhey, Dr A. P. Pillay, Dr K. Masani, Dr J. M. Shah, Dr Kronenberger, Dr Mrs Moraes, Dr Mrs Gorey and Mr Denys Scott. I owe more than I can say to these discussions which clarified many points hitherto obscure and suggested further lines of inquiry. Evelyn Wood not only interested himself in the matter of the book, particularly on the psychological side where he raised many points of importance, but also concerned himself with every aspect of its production and illustration.

Mr F. Berko also assisted in the arrangement of the half-tones, and I must express my appreciation of the workers in the Times of India Press who did the reproductions.

The process of publication, long-drawn as it has inevitably been in the last years of a world war, has been made a constant pleasure by all those, to whom I may not refer by name, who conducted it—my friends in the office of the Oxford University Press, Bombay; the printers of the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta; the map-makers at the Wesley Press, Mysore.

But publication would have been impossible without the practical sense and scientific interest of Mr Jehangir P. Patel and Mr J. R. D. Tata. A munificent subsidy from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, together with a grant from the Darbar of Bastar State, provided the necessary funds for the production and I would express here my deep gratitude for this assistance.

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CORRIGENDA

Page 80, lines 35 and 37. A more literal translation of *ghāt utaris* would be 'she has left (i.e. she has had to leave) the watering-place' and of *dhār bohis* 'the rapids are flowing': *dhār* is a swiftly-running stream, sometimes a waterfall.

Page 172, line 10. Read 'bury' for 'cremate' and in line 12, read 'grave' for 'pyre'. As the rest of the paragraph shows, the body of a woman dying in pregnancy or childbirth is buried, not cremated: this is, I believe, the almost universal custom.

Page 315, footnote 1. For 'out of 1,000 marriages', read 'out of 100 marriages'.

[p.xxx is blank]

PART I

000

THE PATTERN OF MURIA LIFE

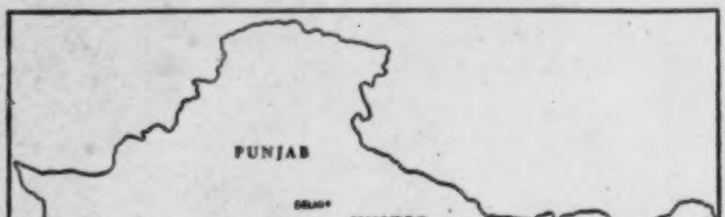
[p. 1]
[p. 2 is blank]

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. BASTAR STATE

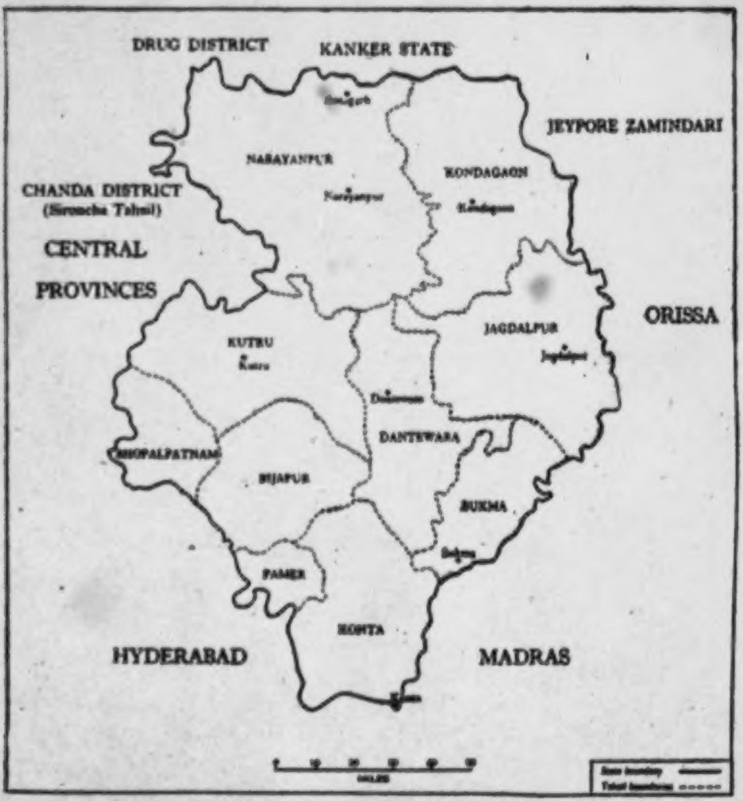
131 THE great plain of Chhattisgarh stretches down past Raipur and Dhamtari in hot and dusty monotony till it spends itself against the hills of Kanker. Thenceforward the journey is a never-failing delight; as the traveller moves towards the Bastar plateau the countryside breaks into song about him; he is greeted by hardy smiling woodmen singing at their work; the skyline is broken by fantastic piles of rock; all around is the evergreen sal forest. Presently he sees looming up before him a row of sharply-rising hills, the sentinels that stand on guard before the country of the ghotul. The white pillars that mark the boundary of the State are soon passed, and the long steep ascent of the Keskal Ghat must be essayed. From the summit there is a magnificent view of the great sea of hill and forest below.



INDIA, SHOWING THE POSITION OF BASTAR STATE

Bastar is a large State of 13,725 square miles lying between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ North and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ East. It is bounded on the north by Kanker

State and the Drug District of the Central Provinces, on the west by the Ahiri Zamindari of the Chanda District, on the east by the great Jeypore Zamindari of Orissa, and to the south by the Nizam's Dominions. In 1931 its population was 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile, but in the last ten years the figure has risen to 634,912. The State is divided into six tahsils and four zamindaris, and is at present administered by a Diwan resident at Jagdalpur, the capital, in the minority of the Maharaja.



ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF BASTAR STATE

An admirable account of the geography and administration of the State is given by Grigson in his standard *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which should be consulted by every reader of this book.[1] Bastar is roughly bisected by the great Indrawati river which flows west from Kalahandi through the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the south of the Abujhmar Mountains to the Chanda border. Here we are not concerned with the beautiful and fascinating country south of the river; our business is with the north.

---

[1] W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (Oxford, 1938).

Scene on the Indrawati River

The Chitrakot Falls in Flood

Plate I

[p. 4 (A)]

Plate II

133

The Kotri River

[346]

Lingo's shrine at
Semurgaon

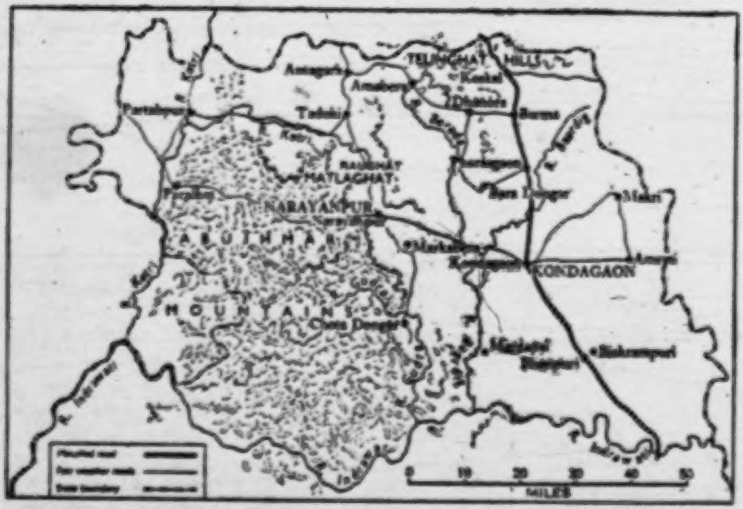
View from the Keskal Ghat

[p. 4 (B)]

INTRODUCTION

131 The territory north of the Indrawati is divided into three administrative divisions. The first, in the north-east, is the Kondagaon Tahsil; the second, in the north-west, is the Narayanpur, formerly the Antagarh, Tahsil, and the third, to the south, is the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Of these only the first two are inhabited by the type of Muria whose institutions and life are the subject of this book; in the heavily populated and fertile lowlands of the Jagdalpur Tahsil the Muria have no ghotul and, under Palace and other influences, have largely abandoned their characteristic beliefs and practices.

133 The Kondagaon Tahsil occupies the great north-eastern plateau of Bastar. This plateau, which is some 2400 feet above sea-level, runs south from the Telinghat Hills as far as Tulsidongri below Jagdalpur. To the east it extends into Jeypore and Kalahandi, and on the west is bordered by the Matlaghat and a range of hills extending south from Benur to Karikot. The scenery is green and pleasant, but rather monotonous except round Bara Dongar—where there are picturesque hills—and in the Chalka Pargana in the neighbourhood of the Boroda and Baordig rivers, where great rocks rising above the fields and forest combine with the quiet river views to make many pictures of serene beauty.



PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE NARAYANPUR AND KONDAGAON TAHSILS

There are two main rivers in the tahsil. The Baordig flows from the north-east corner of the plateau, crosses the main road at Lanjora, winds round by Malakot, cuts the Kondagaon-Narayanpur road at Alwa, passing mostly through scrubby jungle and open tracts of embanked rice-fields, with occasional hills strewn with rocky boulders. Finally it forces its way between steep banks and large rocks till it joins the Boroda near Bayanar. The Boroda comes down through the Amabera Pargana, into the Kongur Pargana, across very similar country, then flows on with the Baordig to join the Indrawati at Karikot.

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These are the main features of the Kondagaon Tahsil: a main road, open all the year round and vibrating day and night to the rumble of lorries connecting the capital with the greater world. A high plateau, broken by one range of hills running north from Bara Dongar and to the south and east.

[131
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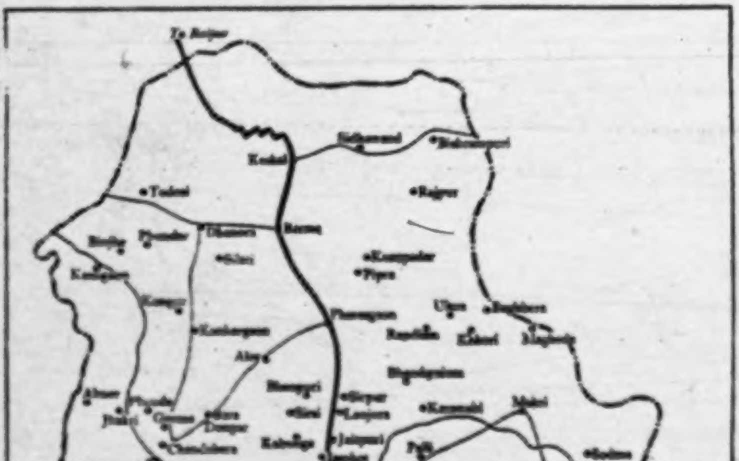

KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Two main rivers and many streams. Forest everywhere, mainly sal forest, green all the year. Four fair-weather roads; one east from Keskal along the northern border to Bishrampuri and on into Jeypore and the Likma Forest

133
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Railway; another from Kondagaon itself round the Makri Reserved Forest, a hunter's paradise. A third goes west from Berma to Antagarh, skirting the south of the Telinghat Hills. A fourth and most important connects the two tahsil headquarters of Kondagaon and Narayanpur.

There are no towns and few important villages. Kondagaon itself has a court with a First Class Magistrate, a police-station, dispensary, middle school, forest, excise and revenue offices and a headquarters of a timber company, a few shops, and an important bi-weekly bazaar. Thousands of Muria visit the place for the Marhai festival in March. There is only one other police-station, at Keskal, an important village at the head of the pass leading down to the lowlands. There are schools here and at Baniagaon, Mardapal, Pharasgaon and Bara Dongar. Bara Dongar is a beautiful village with important Hindu temples and a special connexion with the Maharaja, who is ceremonially enthroned here, when a smaller version of the royal Dassera festival is observed every year.

The population of the Kondagaon Tahsil in 1941 was 111,428. The area is 1880 square miles. It has 511 villages, of which 23 are deserted. In 1942 I counted 278 ghotul in the tahsil, but this figure is probably an underestimate.

The headquarters of the western tahsil have recently been moved from Antagarh to Narayanpur. The Narayanpur Tahsil is much larger than Kondagaon, being 2885 square miles, but its population is only 62,305. It has 831 villages, of which however only 565 are inhabited. In 1942 there were about 244 Muria ghotul. The tahsil has much more character and diversity than Kondagaon and it is not easy to describe. It will be most convenient to follow its roads.

From Berma on the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, there branches a forest road through heavily-wooded and attractive country to Amabera and thence to Antagarh. In its course the road passes the village of Penjori at the edge of the high plateau: two miles away at the end of a path winding through magnificent trees and wild mountain scenery is the famous shrine of Lingo at Semurgaon. Thence the road begins an abrupt descent down the Matlaghat to the Antagarh plain. Unhappily a fringe of trees and tall bamboos, as nearly everywhere in Bastar, hides the view from the traveller's eyes. At the foot of the mountains the road is only 900 feet above sea-level and has reached the northern plain which is simply a continuation southward of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker lowlands. Here is Antagarh, the old administrative centre of the tahsil, where there is still a large bazaar, a police-station and a school. The population of this area is very mixed, for the Muria are influenced both by the wild Maria of the hills and the sophisticated Gond of the lowlands. There are many immigrants from British India.

From Antagarh runs a beautiful road to Narayanpur. On the right are hills of vitrified sandstone that glow pink like dolomite rocks in the evening sun, and half-way along the road climbs the magnificent Raughat between the Abujhmar and Matlaghat Hills. In the woods on either side are charming Muria villages, Padbera, Aturbera, Phulpar and many others.

Narayanpur itself is a very large village not yet grown into a town. It is fresh and open, surrounded by hills in the near distance. Near by is Binjhli among its great mango groves and palms.

From Narayanpur roads go west, south and east. The western road is one of the loneliest and most exciting in Bastar. After passing the Halba centre of Sonpur, it forces its way into the very heart of the Abujhmar through wild and majestic scenery, and on to Paralkot and Partabpur. Here in the

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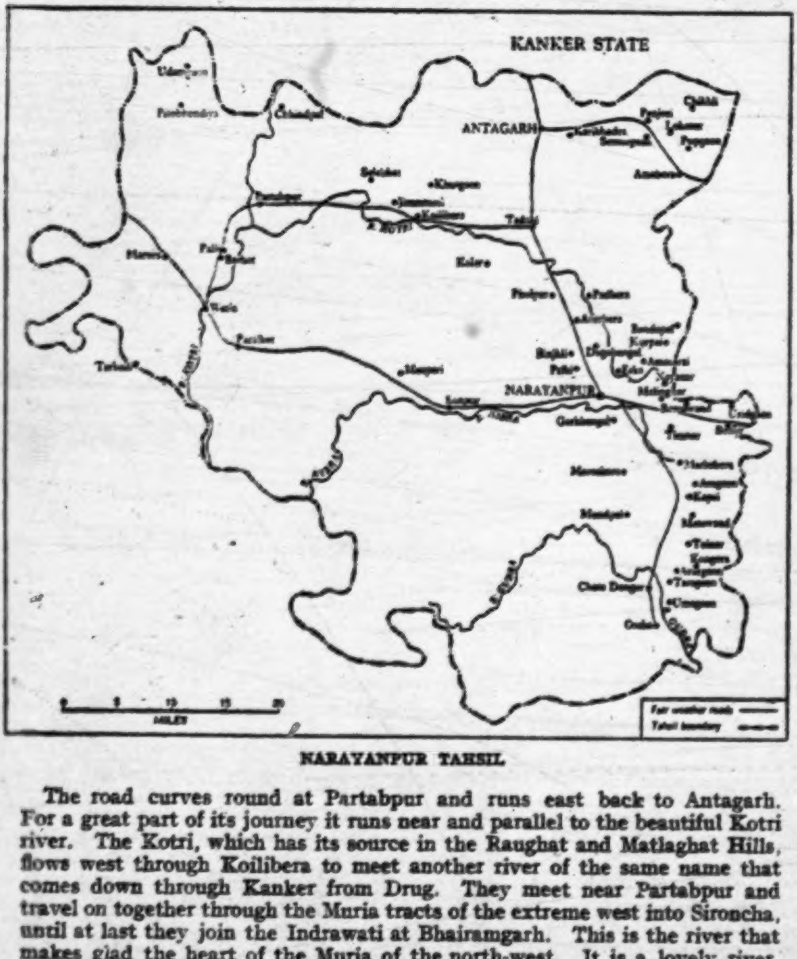
most striking landmark of all Bastar, the great mass of the Abujhmar Mountains, an impregnable fortress, wild, lonely, exalted, exhilarating, home of the Hill Maria. To the west of the mountains, in sharp and striking contrast, is one of the most 'civilized' areas of Bastar, the north-western plain, where the ghotul still flourishes, but a little shyly, and the children have none of the decorations that make their fellows to the south such a delight to see.

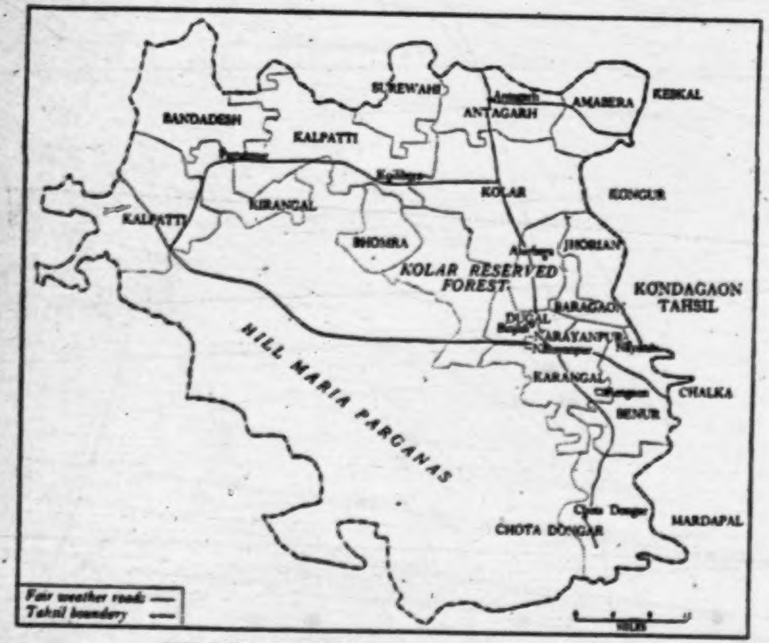


NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The road curves round at Partabpur and runs east back to Antagarh. For a great part of its journey it runs near and parallel to the beautiful Kotri river. The Kotri, which has its source in the Raughat and Matlaghat Hills, flows west through Koilibera to meet another river of the same name that comes down through Kanker from Drug. They meet near Partabpur and travel on together through the Muria tracts of the extreme west into Sironcha, until at last they join the Indrawati at Bhairamgarh. This is the river that makes glad the heart of the Muria of the north-west. It is a lovely river, wide and open, with glorious sands, and every now and then a glimpse of distant mountains. Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent on its banks.'

INTRODUCTION

South and east of Narayanpur is the true Jhoria country, home of the most charming and friendly people in Bastar. Between Narayanpur and Chota Dongar, the villages of the Abujhmar foothills, Kapsi, Markabera, Metawand, Kongera are probably Hill Maria in origin. Beyond Chota Dongar a road goes up into the real Maria country and Orcha village, passing through the wonderful Marian gorge, where the Gudra river emerges through enormous wooded rocks out of the hills. 133 491



THE PARGANAS OF THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The area east of the Antagarh-Narayanpur road is equally attractive. Here are the villages of Nayanar, Bandopal, Almer and Jhakri which frequently appear in this book. The country is well-wooded and hilly, more varied and beautiful than the Kondagaon Tahsil into which it leads. The old Hindu centre of Benur is near the road half-way between the two tahsils.

I have spoken throughout of roads, for they provide a convenient means of finding places on a map, and actually divide up the two northern tahsils very well. But it should not be supposed that these roads are great highways of traffic. Except for the Keskal-Jagdalpur road, not one of them is open during the rains. Several cannot be used by cars before December. The roads are important as agents of culture-change, however, because along them come the slow-moving trains of bullock-wagons, the ever-touring chaprasi and constable, the merchant on his laden horse. These are not, of course, confined to the official roads; the inter-village communications of north Bastar 491

491 are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

631 Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

101 The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

[162] *The Hill Maria* are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

[162] *The Bison-horn Maria*, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

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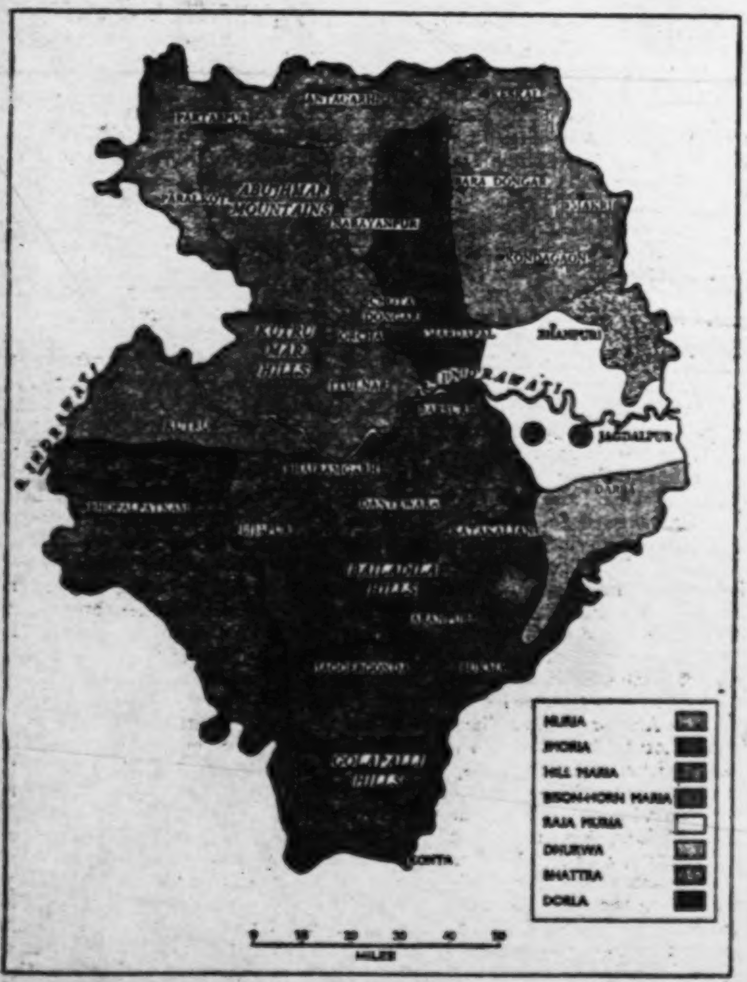
[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944).

INTRODUCTION

The Bhattra. In 1931 the Bhattra numbered 36,611 in Bastar, but there are many more of them in Jeypore and Kalahandi. In Bastar they are strongest in the north-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil, but a 'Bhattra movement' is spreading among the Muria of Kondagaon. Its main features are the wearing of a sacred thread and the abolition of the ghotul. They are said to have come with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, and they are rapidly becoming a Hindu caste like the Raj Gond, to whom they are probably related.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL TRIBES IN BASTAR STATE

101 [162] *The Dhurwa*, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

[162] *The Halba.* This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

[162] *The Dhakar* is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

[162] *The Jagdalpur Muria*, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or [illegible]opa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Eha says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

[162] [582] *The Mahara*, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reporting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

Plate III

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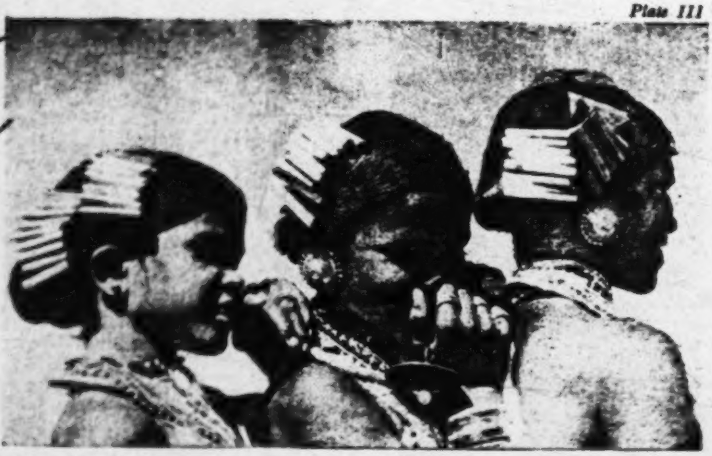

ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujaro, Sulk and Mularo of the Barko ghotul

[p.12 (A)]

Plate IV

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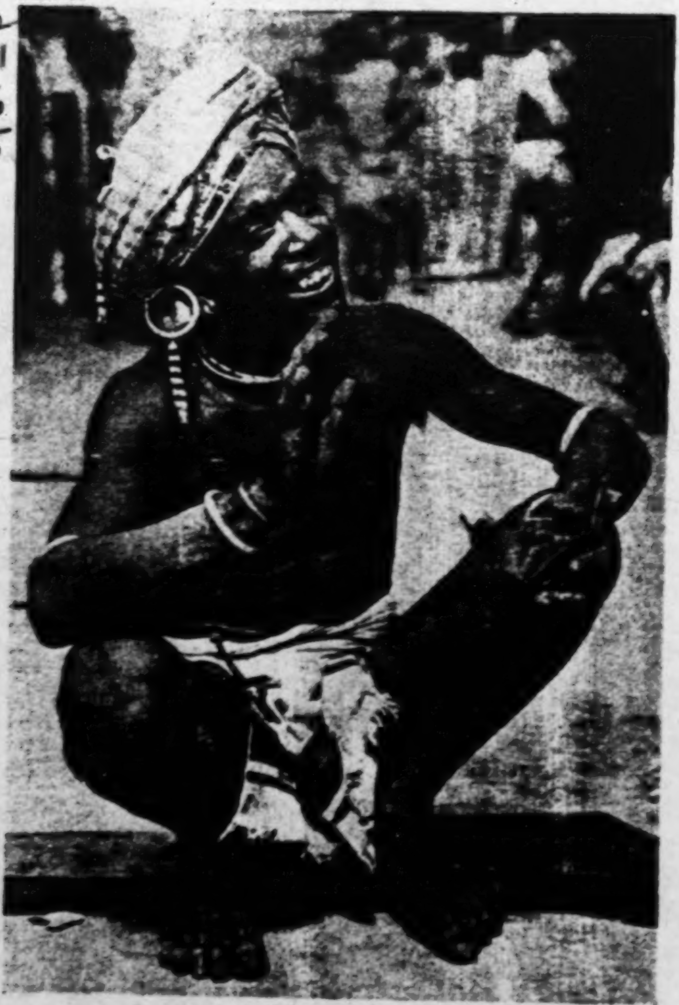
291
516
415



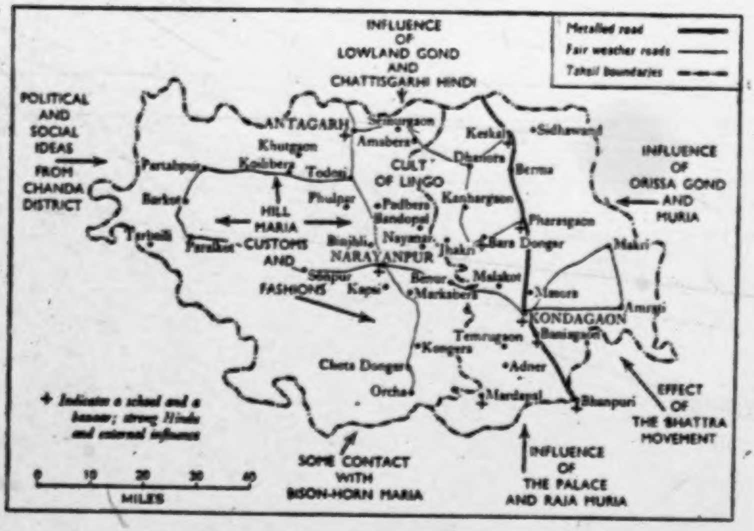
A Maria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking salphi juice

[p. 12 (B)]

101 celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 [162] Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.

[177]


INFLUENCE OF LOWLAND GOND AND CHATTISGARHI HINDI
Metalled road
Fair weather roads
Tahsil boundaries
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS FROM CHANDA DISTRICT
ANTAGARH
Amabera
Keskal
Sidhawand
Khutgaon
Koilibera
Partapur
CULT OF LINGO
Dhanora
INFLUENCE OF ORISSA GOND AND MURIA
Barkot
Phulpar
Kanhargaon
HILL MARIA CUSTOMS AND FASHIONS
Bandopal
Pharasgaon
Paralkot
Binjhli
Jhakri
Bara Dongar
Makri
NARAYANPUR
Sonpur
Kapsi
Benur
Malakot
Markabera
KONDAGAON
Temrugaon
Kongera
Chota Dongar
Adner
Orcha
Mardapal
Bhanpuri
EFFECT OF THE BHATTRA MOVEMENT
+ Indicates a school and a bazaar; strong Hindu and external influence
SOME CONTACT WITH BISON-HORN MARIA
INFLUENCE OF THE PALACE AND RAJA MURIA
0 10 20 30 40
MILES

SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State. [162]

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

181 Pujari for the shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon and Pardhan minstrels and priests are to be found in some Muria villages. Pardhan boys and girls are admitted to membership of the ghotul.

I found *Nahar* at Kuntpadar and at Kabonga and neighbouring villages. Their boys and girls had joined the ghotul and were taking a leading part in its affairs. Elsewhere this tribe has a very low position: it is mainly to be found in the west Central Provinces and Berar and is regarded as derived from a mixture of Bhil and Korku.

III. The Muria

Kariya mur ke manse ān. We are the dark people.—Muria saying

The word 'Muria' is used in Bastar to mean, generally, an aboriginal. In this sense it has long been applied by State officials to all the primitive tribes except the Maria of the Abujhmar. In recent years the people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the Dantewara Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari, the tribe which Grigson calls 'Bison-horn Maria' returned themselves as 'Muria' at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. There is thus a good deal of confusion about the proper classification of the Bastar aboriginals. Let me therefore say at once that when I use the term 'Muria' in this book, I apply it to the aboriginals of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils whose culture centres round the ghotul.
[162] Grigson estimated that there were some 78,000 of these in 1931; there are about 100,000 now.

The name Muria has been derived from *mur*, the palas tree, or from *mur*, a root.[1] There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the palas tree, which is neither a totem, nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their territory. But the derivation of the word from *mur*, a root, has much to commend it. *Mur* may also mean 'permanent', as in *mur podor*, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname: the Muria, in contrast to the Hill Maria, have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'.[2] Hislop describes them as more civilized than the Maria, forming 'the bulk of the agricultural population in the north and centre'. Beyond the eastern frontier, however, 'where they mix with the Khonds in Patna, Kharond and Jeypur, they are somewhat wilder and devoted to the chase'.[3]

184 We must now survey these Muria of the north, for they are not all of one family, and the differences between them are interesting and significant. I will begin with the western parganas, lying to the west and north of the great mass of the Abujhmar Hills. It is in these hills that the key to many a Muria custom will be found. The people of these parganas seem to be Hill Maria who first settled in the plains and then came under strong alien

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[1] R. V. Russell and R. B. Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. III, p. 64.

[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 186.

[3] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866), Part I, p. 22.

influence from across the Chanda border. Their villages are a compromise
between the communalism of the Maria and the individualism of the Gond; 184
the houses are arranged in streets and open on to one another, but they have
substantial independent gardens behind. The women often dress in almost
Maria fashion, exposing the breasts, but wearing few ornaments, and the men
imitate the fashions of the Chanda border. Ten years ago, at the time of a
Satyagraha agitation, many of them bought Gandhi caps. These are still
worn, but pulled out of all shape to make them politically respectable. The
ghotul is used mainly by boys and men; in Maria fashion it is the centre of
the male life of the village, a tendency which the external influences across the
border tend to strengthen.

In the northern parganas, the Muria have many links with their fellows in Kanker State and the Drug District. There are ghotul in both these areas, but in Drug ghotul life has become furtive and obscene, strumpeted by the contagion of the plains. The people in these northern parganas look and dress like the Gond of the Central Provinces; they have no affinities with the Maria of the neighbouring Padalibhum, whom they regard with amused astonishment. But they have the ghotul system very fully developed, although some of them vehemently deny the fact at a first conversation.

To the east, the Antagarh and Amabera Parganas are very similar—the people in dress and manners akin to the Gond of the Central Provinces. Here the cult of Lingo is at its strongest, and the Muria appear to be immigrants from the north. Although the ghotul flourishes, the people here are perhaps the least attractive of the Muria, for they are suspicious, timid and ill-mannered.

There is a striking contrast between these drab and sullen northern Muria and the people south of Narayanpur. This is the country of the best, most beautiful, most charming of all the peoples of Bastar, the so-called Jhoria Muria. These Muria are, according to their own account, Maria of the Abujhmar who have settled in the plains. They have retained a great deal of their original Maria culture but, where they have altered, they have improved and developed it—an astonishing variant of the normal result of culture-change.

In Bastar, says Hislop, 'the Madias are also called Jhorias, probably from 101
jhodi, a brook'.[1] Dalton, deriving the word Maria from the Gondi term for
a tree, *mara*, says the Maria 'are also called Jhoria, from *jhodi*, a brook. This 184
is the name given to the gold-washers in Chutia Nagpur, who are in all
probability Gonds likewise'. The word Jharia is found as the name of the
wilder sub-divisions of several tribes in the Central Provinces,[2] and there is
a section of the Poroja of Orissa called Jhoria.[3] I visited some Jhoria villages
in Koraput District in 1944. They are an attractive people, with a fully
developed megalithic culture and the village dormitory, but they bear no
resemblance to the Bastar Jhoria.

The first to describe these 'Jhoorias' was Glasfurd who, writing in 1862, 184
says that they 'are found principally in the north-western parts about
Narayenpoor and Partabpore, and extend towards Kakeir; they are a numerous

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[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 7.

[2] P. N. Bose gives Koitur or Jharia among his classes of Gond, 'to which class', he says, 'the hill Gonds belong almost exclusively. Jharia literally means "jungly".'—P. N. Bose, 'Chattisgar: Notes on its tribes, sects and castes' in *JASB.*, Vol. LIX (1890), Part I, p. 283.

[3] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 197. A note by M. W. M. Yeatts on the Porojas and Sooras. See also G. Ramadas, 'Porojas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 247, and E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. VI, pp. 209ff.

class, and subsist partly by cultivation and partly by hunting and on the fruits of the forest. Their dress resembles that of the following caste, the Marias, with whom they may be said to constitute about a third or more of the population of the Bustar Dependency, and whom they resemble in customs and appearance.'[1] But in the 1891 Census only 936 people returned themselves as Jhoria; the 'numerous class' had probably by that time been merged in the Muria. Sir Benjamin Robertson writes of them that 'the Jhorias are more akin to the Marias than to the Murias; they resemble the former in dress and like them prefer a life in the woods to the attractions of a civilization even so mild as that of the Bastar country'.[2]

Unfortunately the word 'Jhoria' is no longer in general use, for it would have been a convenient term to describe this distinctive and delightful people. At the present time, some eighty years after Glasfurd wrote, the Muria of Partabpur do not seem to be properly classed with the 'Jhoria', nor should the word 'Narayanpur' be used in this connexion. Both in the Partabpur Tahsil and the immediate vicinity of Narayanpur, alien influence has been too strong; the characteristic signs of the Jhoria are there, but they are sadly weakened. At the present time, there are Jhoria living in the Ghat Jhorian, Jhorian, Baragaon, Narayanpur (except near the town), Dugal and Karangal Parganas, the west of the Benur Pargana, the east or plains area of the Chota Dongar Pargana, and the Mardapal, Chalka and a few villages of the Sonawal and Bamni Parganas in the Kondagaon Tahsil.

What are the characteristics of these Jhoria Muria? They are Hill Maria who have descended from the Abujhmar and have come into cultural contact, not with any 'superior' aliens but with a sympathetic and allied people. The Muria of the plains taught these Hill Maria to develop their ghotul system; hitherto they had confined it to boys and men—the plains Muria transformed it by admitting the motiari. The Muria taught them new dances, but preserved the old hill dances for the worship of the gods. Even these they developed, extending the monotonous Maria 'round' into a procession. The Gond of the north would have soon stripped off the feathers and profusion of bead necklaces and cowrie belts from their new neighbours; not so the Muria. The new and exciting theory of a 'co-educational' ghotul stimulated these Maria; it made them wash—the Jhoria are some of the cleanest people in Bastar, though their ancestral Maria are among the dirtiest; it awoke their artistic sense, impelling them to make ever better necklaces and combs, wooden supports for the hair of their motiari, tobacco pouches so carved that they would inform a girl at a glance of your intention.

It is impossible to say at this date whether the custom of erecting monoliths for the dead, the allocation of territory to each clan, the making of clan-gods, the observance of agricultural festivals spread through the Muria country as a result of Maria influence, or whether similar customs always existed and merely reacted on one another.

These Muria, even those so far away as in the Jhorian Pargana, say, 'We are Maria' and admit that they intermarry with the hillmen. They call their funerary rites 'a thing of the Maria Raj' and their special festival dances the 'Maria-endanna'.

It is always with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to these charming children of the foothills and turn to the Muria of the plains. Yet these Muria too have great and many virtues and a culture well worth our study. As we move into the Kondagaon Tahsil, into the Kongur and Sonawal Parganas, we find the influence of the Abujhmar steadily decreasing. The gay feathers disappear from the turban, the pretty headbands go from the brow; bells are still tied in Maria fashion over the buttocks for a religious dance, but the boys waggle them horizontally instead of in the striking and effective vertical rhythm of the hills. We begin to find marriages celebrated in the house of the bride instead of the bridegroom; on the other hand, the parade round the pole is done outside the marriage-booth in old Gond fashion instead of inside after the Hindu use. The ghotul theory changes a little. Probably the majority of Jhoria ghotul are of the older 'pairing-off' type, in which a chelik 'marries' a motiari and remains faithful to her. But now we begin to find the rule coming more and more into force that boys and girls must not combine in this fashion, but must change; a chelik is fined if he sleeps with the same girl for more than three days in succession.

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[1] C. L. R. Glasfurd, *Report on the Dependency of Bustar*, 1862, par. 86.

[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, pp. 182 and 186.

A third cultural area extends from the middle of the Kondagaon Tahsil, past the hills of Bara Dongar, across the main road and away to the east and south towards the Jeypore boundary. The first area is that of the north, from Partabpur to Keskal, where there is a large admixture of Drug and Kanker Gond; the second is the area of the south and west, where the people are mainly Maria who have settled in the foothills; this third area may be called that of the aboriginal Gond of Bastar. The Muria of this part conform physically, as Grigson rightly says, 'more to the standard type of Central Provinces Gond than any other Koitor in Bastar; they are short in stature but well-proportioned, with roundish heads, flat noses, distended nostrils, ugly features, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustaches'.[1] Dress and fashions have become rather mediocre; there is not a trace of Maria influence. The girls wear cheap bazaar ornaments in the ears, no headbands, and none of the elaborate necklace-wear that is so beloved of the Jhoria. They put a few combs in their hair and sling a number of red and white necklaces about their necks. The boys sometimes put on a lot of red, white and black necklaces, but they seem to have none of the sense of colour that characterizes their brethren to the west. The ghotul system flourishes; there is perhaps a majority of the ghotul of the modern type. Round Kondagaon especially, the ghotul building is often out in the jungle with a small and secret door. Marriages are a curious blend of old Gond and new Hindu elements, but are generally more splendid in display and consistent in ritual than among the Jhoria, who only a few generations ago celebrated a wedding with nothing more than a dance and a heavy meal. Religion and worship have the misfortune to lack the magnificent Maria festal dancing; on the other hand, secular dances are much more varied and exciting. A few Hindu gods have crept into the pantheon and many villages engage low-caste Hindu drummers and trumpeters who torture the air with their cacophanies. But it should not be supposed that the Kondagaon Muria are more 'Hinduized' than those to the west. Hindu influence is still a very local matter: an ardent Hindu schoolmaster or forest-guard may influence the people of his immediate neighbourhood, but his effect does not travel far. Funerary customs, however, are almost universally on the Hindu pattern, though the practice of erecting memorial monoliths has not yet wholly disappeared.

The ghotul continues to exist immediately beyond the Bastar border at many points. In Kanker State there are still nearly 80 of these dormitories with a ghotul population of 1218. There are a few ghotul in the Chanda

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 48.

184 and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

[162] The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Carbchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

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582 With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

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[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

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Plate V

A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

Plate VI

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301

Nari, the priest and landlord of Nayanar

[p. 18 (B)]

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves 582 from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. [141] Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

144 'Taking all the characters together, I am inclined to the view that the Muria are not different from the Bhil of the Vindhyan ranges measured by me and belong essentially to what we have termed the Proto-Australoid group. While this is really the basic-type, it is possible that they have absorbed a little of the blood of a finer racial type (as a result probably of their contact with higher caste Hindus across the Godavari) as shown in the occasional occurrences of a longish face, thin lips, prominent chin and well-developed prominent nose. In addition there is unmistakably a Mongoloid element, though very small, and it appears to be more marked in the Hill Maria and the Muria of the foothills than the Muria of the plains. How exactly this has to be accounted for, remains to be seen but I am inclined to agree with Hutton that the intrusion probably came from the eastern coastal regions.'

V. MURIA MIGRATIONS

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria—having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 5.

INTRODUCTION

Mai's anklets, but as they were crossing the river some sand got into them and she stopped to clean them. When the music of the anklets ceased, the Raja turned round to see what was the matter. Danteshwari was very angry and cried, 'You have disobeyed me. You might have been the greatest of all kings, but now your kingdom must stop here.'

Bhikari Muria, the Gaita of Kerawahi, gave a different account:

> Our ancestors came from Warangal driven by hunger and thirst, and were searching for a home and food to live. Seven brothers reached Jarandi village and slept near a thrashing-floor. The next morning they saw a great heap of kodon chaff. Their wives examined it and found there was still much grain left there, so they told their husbands to fetch bullocks from the village. The brothers each gathered a bin full of grain and went to the villagers saying, 'Look, how much grain we have found, take it, for it is yours'. But the villagers said, 'No, we had thrown away the chaff, and there was no grain there; what you have got is a gift of the gods'. Then with what they had found the seven brothers scattered in the villages of Otenda, Jarandi, Magenda, Kerawahi, Bandaseoni, Umargaon and Uridgaon. These were the first Muria villages. The brothers were of the Kawachi clan and these villages are their *bhum* (clan-territory).

This story comes from the east of the State. Many of the accounts given in the west describe how the Muria first settled in the Abujhmar and were originally Maria. Eighty-year-old Bindo of Benur, for example, describes how,

> My ancestors lived in Warangal. One of them had a dream. The god Raja Dokara appeared to him and told him to go to Bastar, for the god himself was going there. So my ancestor followed the god and settled at Teknar in the land of the Maria.
>
> Some time later my ancestor went to the lowlands to buy bullocks. The Muria there said to him, 'Come and live with us here and we will make you our leader'. My ancestor agreed to do so, but when he returned to Teknar to fetch his belongings, the Maria would not let him go.
>
> But after a time, Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Come down to the lowlands and I will help you; I will give you a Muria wife and will make you the chief of the village'. When he heard this, my ancestor left Teknar and came to settle in Benur. Here the Muria gave him a wife and he became one of them and the chief of that village.

In Sidhawand, a Muria village on the Kanker border, the headman, who belongs to the Kassi Maravi clan, said that his ancestors came from Garha-Mandla,[1] but where this was he could not say.

The tradition of a migration from Lanji-Dhamda [2] is vaguer and less detailed than that of the royal pilgrimage from Warangal. Yet it persists. Bara Pen

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[1] Garha and Mandla are often mentioned together as if they were one place. Mandla was the capital of the Gond Raja, Hirde Shah, from 1650 to 1706, after which the Gond Rajas were known as 'kings of Garha-Mandla' until the kingdoms collapsed before the Marathas.

[2] Lanji is also connected with ancient Gond history. A Rajput adventurer—according to one tradition—named Jadho Rai took service in the court of one of the original Gond Rajas at Lanji and, marrying his daughter, occupied the throne and thus started the Gond

173 was born from a stone in Lanji-Dhamda. The Poyami Gaita at Jamkot claimed that 'the Poyami clan came from Dhamda, but is now scattered everywhere'. In Ulera and neighbouring villages the Muria said that they were really Gond from Lanji-Dhamda and that they intermarried with Kanker and Jeypore Gond.

Rajput dynasty which continued for hundreds of years. In comparatively modern times a fort was built at Lanji by one of the Gond Rajas of Garha-Mandla. 'While engaged in the excavations, a spirit appeared who declared herself to be the goddess Lanjkai and she promised to constitute herself protectrix of the fort, provided a human sacrifice was yearly offered at her shrine. It was consequently named after her. Many years later, Chimanjee Bhonsla on his Cuttack expedition took the Lanjee road. He saw and valued the position of the fort and erected a small temple in honour of Lanjkai. Though human sacrifices are not now offered, the Gond Raja of Kawardah, on visiting the Nagpore Exhibition in 1865, found it necessary to sacrifice goats at the shrine that his ancestors had dedicated to Lanjkai.'—A. J. Lawrence, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Bhandara District* (Bombay, 1867), p. 29.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to 361
see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no
such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical
Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are
set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often
choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed
within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp
distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the
Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a
common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures
of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house
is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many
dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also,
groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered,
to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout
of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul
are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, 342
are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs.
As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the
east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the
room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special
menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the
neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman
on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and 361
cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth,
and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; 231
the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy
and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. 342
Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and
arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the [769]
mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and
placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the 591
homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre
in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training
for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be
good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing 511
with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar,
whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces.
I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually
poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

511 prosperous than their fellows in a district like Mandla. In Mandla, for example, or Bilaspur, the worst poverty is the poverty of the spirit, the decay of art and culture, the disappearance of tribal religion, the dying-out of dance and song. Against this background, material want stands out stark and bare. But the Muria of Bastar has a full rich life; every day brings its delightful and absorbing pursuits; at least twice a month there is a sharp break in the monotony, the colour and music of a festival, the excitement of a hunt, the romance of a dancing expedition—and all the time, if you are young, there is the ghotul which you would not exchange for any offer of material wealth.

II. Cultivation

241 'It is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to slip from a branch,' but it is not necessary to spend very much time on this subject, important as it is. The axe-cultivation of the Maria, which closely resembles that of the Muria, has been fully discussed by Grigson,[1] and for its wider implications my own account of bewar in *The Baiga* may be consulted.[2] The Muria's permanent rice-cultivation hardly differs from that elsewhere in India and need not be described in detail.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because we must never forget that the ghotul exists in a setting of agriculture, food-gathering and hunting, I will give a brief outline of the Muria's methods of cultivation.

There are three kinds of axe-cultivation and the Muria practise them all, for 'the axe is our milk-giving cow':

1. *Penda* is cut on the steep slopes of hills. The Muria fells the trees and undergrowth, fires them when dry, and sows his seed in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a *penda* clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth. After two or three years a *penda* plot is abandoned and a new clearing made. This is the most common form of axe-cultivation among the Hill Maria: it is the bewar of the Baiga. No plough or hoe is used. For beans and pulses, holes are dibbled with a primitive digging-stick.

2. *Dippa*, also called *marhān* and *erka*, differs from *penda* in three ways—
   - (*a*) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.
   - (*b*) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area; in a *penda* clearing no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.
   - (*c*) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground, or dug into it with a hoe, and only then is the seed sown.

3. *Parka* or *dahi* differs again: in *dippa* and *penda* clearings, the trees are felled in the very place where it is desired to sow. They are burnt on the spot. But in *parka*, trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the field and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria plough them into the ground and sow their seed.

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 125–50.

[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 100–31.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle. 241

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare-Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

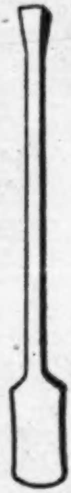

Fig. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron *Length 1' 7"*

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'. 834 241 782

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pudo*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths. 241 788

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*. 241

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] [372] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *horlat* or *balla* (*dhosna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes [291] called *hatwak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark [147] and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

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[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandagarh* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I [787] describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.

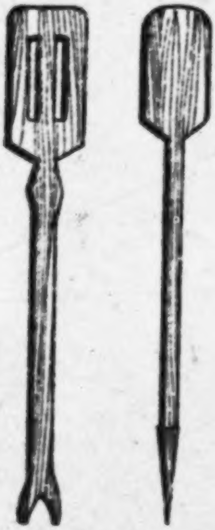

FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking *Length 1' 9"*

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The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *hikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kutki* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilized areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; 342 there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

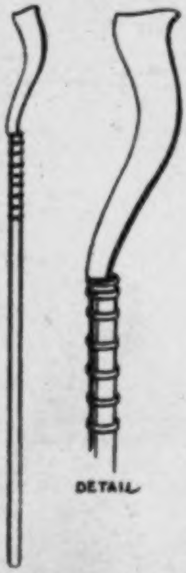

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood

Length 5' 9"

[417]
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241
784
[524]
[513]

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and [789] leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

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[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the eld.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow [777
r bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchadar*, the term
eing explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarna- 775]
ion a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his
kull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

241 they still make a small *parka* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

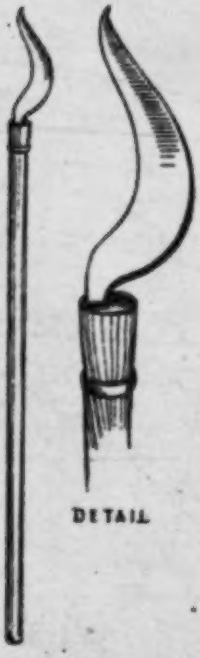

FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 5' 10"

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arai; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps
[226] where the water escapes through the embankments.
[184] It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *kara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

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[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1892), pp. 115 and 141.

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bari*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 196

Irpa Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kuvam Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or Pona Pandum (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

A Cultivation Song

241 A song sung to accompany the Korak Dahiya Karsana illustrates the various processes of cultivation and life in the fields.

539	*Werpendoy pendoy rāmo rāmo!*	In the Wendpendoy jungle is the hill Ramo!
	Korah pehchi wāykom sāngo.	We will come to cut the tree branches, *sāngo.*
	Miya wāy wāy pehchtorom sāngo	Before you came we had cut the branches.
	Korah hāh wāykom sāngo	We will come to spread the branches in the field.
	Miya wāy wāy hāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had spread the branches.
	Hurri tāsi wāykom sāngo	We will come to set fire to it with straw.
	Miya wāy wāy hurri tāstorom sāngo	Before you came we had set fire to it.
	Lāting tata wāykom sāngo	We will come to bring the rake.
	Miya wāy wāy lating tatorom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the rake.
	Parka puhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to plough the *parka* clearing.
	Miya wāy wāy puhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had ploughed the clearing.
	Gorāng witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the mandia seed.
	Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
	Hāmo witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the *hāmo* seed.
	Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
	Gorāng kichi wāykom sāngo	We will come to pick the mandia crop.
	Miya wāy wāy kichtorom sāngo	Before you came we had picked the crop.
	Gorāng jāhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to thrash the grain with a stick.
	Miya wāy wāy jāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had thrashed the grain.
	Gorāng hemi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sift the grain in a basket.
	Miya wāy wāy hemtom sāngo	Before you came we had sifted the grain.
	Gorāng taddi wāykom sāngo	We will come to gather the mandia grain.
	Miya wāy wāy taddihtom sāngo	Before you came we had gathered the grain.
	Gorāng widing wāykom sāngo	We will come to make a rope-bin for the grain.
	Miya wāy wāy widihtom sāngo	Before you came we had stored the grain.

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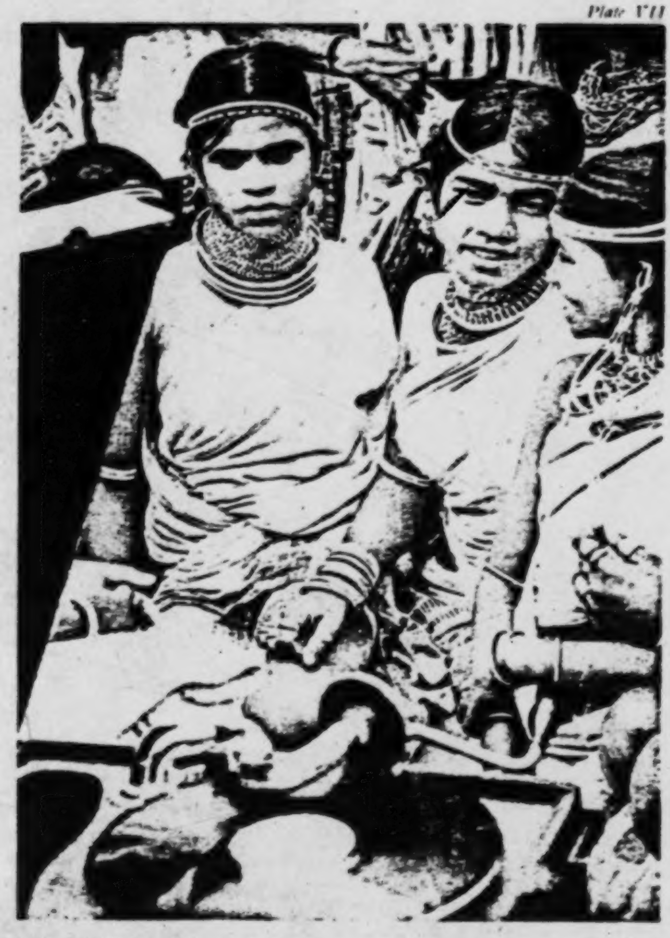
Plate VII



Motiari of Munjmeta listening
to the gramophone

[p. 30 (A)]

Plate VIII

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¹ Motiari ploughing at Bayasar

² Carrying earth to embank a field

³ Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(B)]

241 *Dhusir jăhi wăykom săngo*	We will come to press the grain into the bin.
539 *Miya wăy wăy jăhtorom săngo.*	Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 196 It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January ..	Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.
February ..	Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.
March ..	Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.
April ..	Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.
May ..	Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.
June ..	Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.
July ..	Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.
August ..	Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.
September	Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.
October ..	Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dasera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

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	the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.
November..	A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, thrashing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.
December..	In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 241 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parka*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only 262
boys and girls—is in food. '*Bhaio bihān handiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products; one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers 262
begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and 252
children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow 222
patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in
specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are
beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a
pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit [373]
and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used
for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and
make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make
a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari 262
fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees 222
grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with [563]
chilli and salt to the chelik.

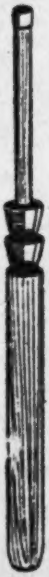

FIG. 5.
Uepal rice
husker
Length
3' 9"

Acura fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon
came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its [524]
eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—
'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver
is sweet'; the anua, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is
picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is [251]
buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw.
Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 151.

The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
262 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
222 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and
252 stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs,
regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful
[278] remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
262 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
276 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams;
524 a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries'
262 when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An
843 interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

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[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped 262
open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse
fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth 843
and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

276

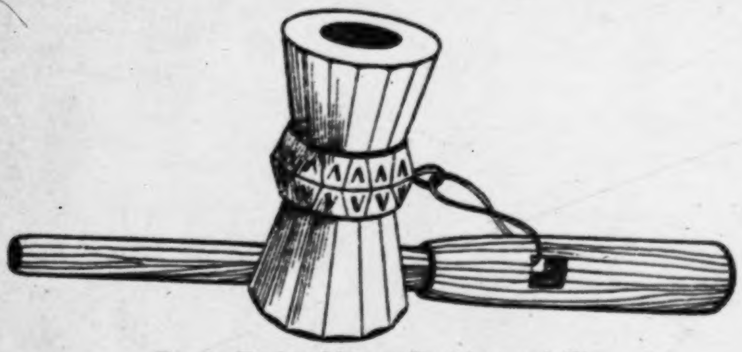


FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times 264
a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-
cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia 262
grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the
Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods 252
of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots [263]
or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth 354
of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen
pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. 415
Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of 252
doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skimmed and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262
146 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimāre wehe dāntona rawmāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hikāt kuro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sārpane doyo artu roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhekāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Watle marāte kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woher inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaha reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222
539 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

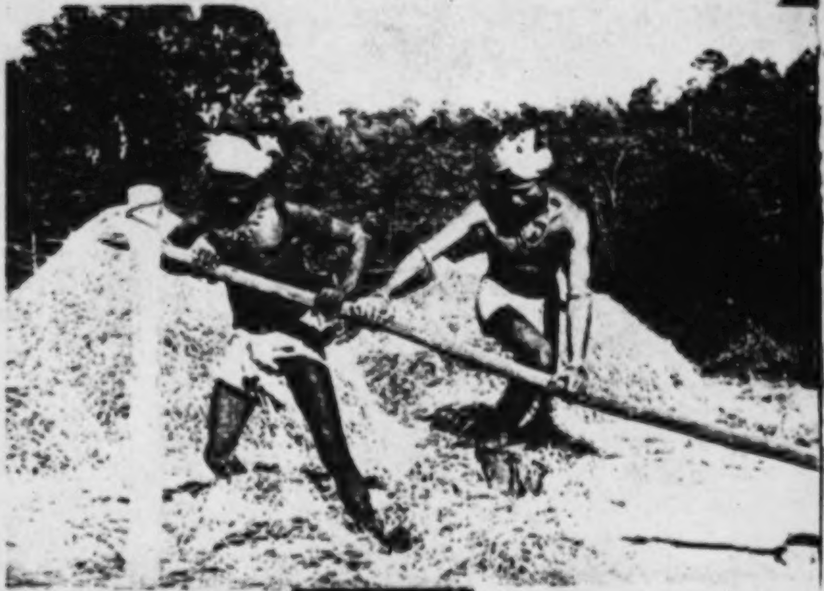
241
482

Chelik bringing wood
for dahi cultivation

Plate IX

Muria firing a marhan
clearing near Autagarh

[p.36(A)]



Chelik at Markabera thrashing with their feet

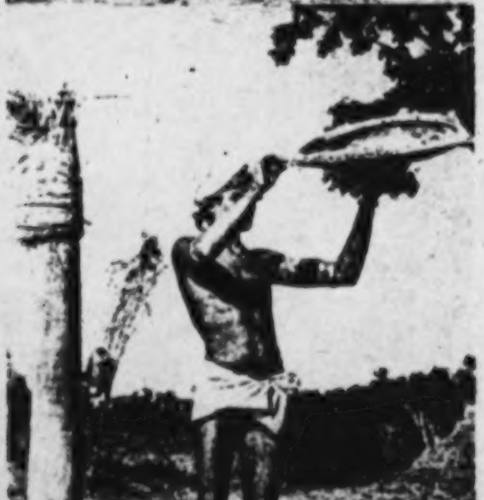


Plate X

Winnowing grain. Note the first sheaf tied to the thrashing pole

[p. 36 (B)]

222 539 had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honeycomb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

222 [245] The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitha ondār* and the *lohti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lohti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light [417] it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

[263] The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

[777] Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

524 The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

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[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mahu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mahu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mahu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nikiti mahu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[171] [2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 430.

524 *Wori wori singār,*
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.
Tutri bukāte bātri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.
Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.
A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.
Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.
Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539 *Song*

The bees suck the koara flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. OIL

Ann kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapara kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify—Muria saying

252 The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gīraneyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the [373 wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or 493] kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

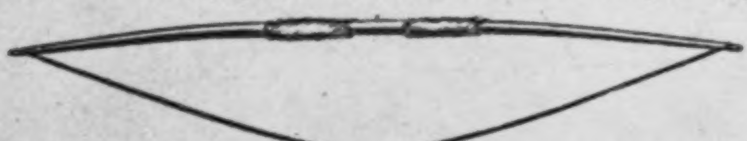
oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking. 252 [302]

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gāramol*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gāratote*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. HUNTING

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey 262



[411]

FIG. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 5' 4"

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

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[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Peda's great-grandfather did this. The Waddai and Gaita of Dualkarka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

262 in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

825 The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that [152] the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tita*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tita de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude, peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

[411]

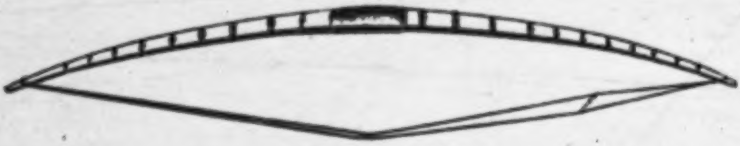

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, [261] some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho oh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

224 For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though
411 some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

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[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow, The Muria do not seem to know the *engrām*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats. 224 [41]

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle— [524]
'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor kāyna mānjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set 223
in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

224
223
[41]

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

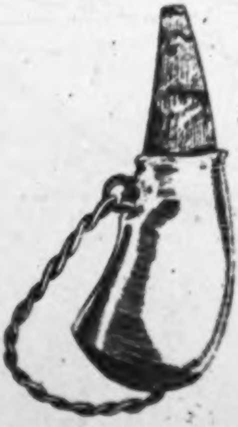


FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

224
796
787

224 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success
796 or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha
medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be
787 found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather
under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and
arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new
Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

796 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur
776 Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or
other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund
Rau, Khanma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that
was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors
not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every
[782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the
god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that
those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most
fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt.
As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe
841 the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered. 224 841 [411]

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

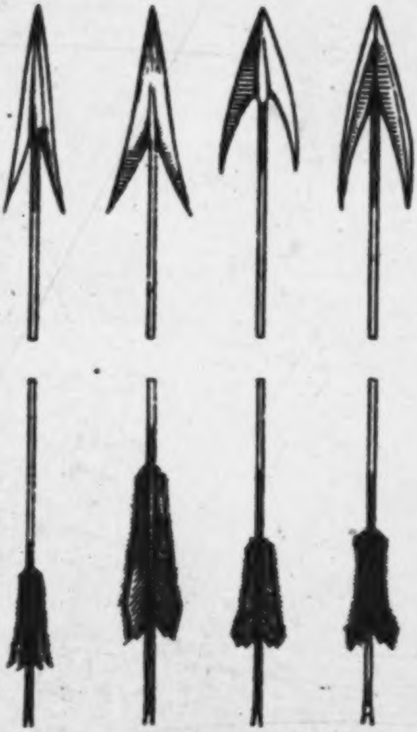


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 1' 5"

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection. 224 837

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul. 533 224

I

Chikhal mãti hariya mãma hãri-gir hãrigir shikãri shikãri!	O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Tupak sãja kimu mãma.	Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
Mãli gondi tupãk mãma.	The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Gopir hewer sora mãma.	Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

539 224

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
224

Tumir mara jhāka māma.	The machan is on the ebony tree, uncle shikari.
Jhākā sāje kimu māma.	Make the machan there, uncle shikari.
Ghotiya kāya goli māma.	Make bullets like ghotiya fruit, uncle shikari.
Jhāka udi dākat māma.	We will go and sit on the machan, uncle shikari.
Nāwa suda waiki bāncha.	You must come with me, nephew shikari.
Wātek icho waiki bāncha.	If you are ready, come with me, nephew shikari.
Māoku wātek pehchkāt bāncha.	When the sambhar comes we will shoot it, nephew shikari.
Hāle mara māri bāncha.	On the hill of sal trees, nephew shikari.
Akey khojin oykāt bāncha.	We will go to search there, nephew shikari.

2

Kaināke gulel dai kaināke dori wo dai sona kaināke gunel?	What is the *gulel* made of, what is the rope, mother?
Bāns ke to gulel bābu san sutri doriga bābu.	The *gulel* is made of bamboo, and the rope of hemp, my son.
Kaināke ghora dai kaināke phata wo dai?	What is the horse made of, and what is the bridle, mother?
Bans ke to ghora bābu sut ke to phata bābu.	The horse is made of bamboo, the bridle of thread, my son.
Kaināke dhuti dai kaināke ke gulla?	What is the basket made of, and what are the pellets, mother?
Bāns ke to dhuti bābu māti ke gulla.	The basket is made of bamboo, and the pellets of earth, my son.
Koni hāt men gulel dai koni hāt men gulla?	In which hand is the *gulel*, and in which the pellets, mother?
Dori hāt men gulel bābu jewni hāt men gulla.	The *gulel* is in the left hand, the pellets in the right, my son.

3

Taina nāmar nāna re nān nāmar nān ho

Māligondi tupak tun bor sāje kindar ho?	Who made the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun mistri sāje kindar.	The carpenter made the Maligondi gun.
Teka marra hata tun bor sāje kindar ho?	Who made the stock of teak?
Teka marra hata tun bor-ki sāje kindar:	The carpenter made the stock of teak.
Kakre kāl bakre tun bor sāje kindar ho?	Who made the trigger of the gun?
Kakre kāl bakre tun mistri sāje kindar.	The carpenter made the trigger of the gun.

Plate XI

222
481

The fermented sap of the sago-palm is a favourite drink

[p. 44 (a)]

241
291
301

Chelik of Bayana?
digging

Plate XII

[283]

The Maliya of
Phanda spinning
rope

[p.44(B)]

224
534

Māligondi tupah tun bor payal āndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupah tun singāl payal āndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli āndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ihla hur dulhi patār singāl weli āndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl hunjil māta ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara hursi manji singāl udil āndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tiksi tun singāl mānde hindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa hursi manjil singāl dābe hindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tohli tohli lariyo bodāl mutil ānd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri hāpa linga laya gorkāwātil ānd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nānāho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu keto dera re ho kahān ohar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu keto dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri keto dera re ho, kahān ohar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ke dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawala* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

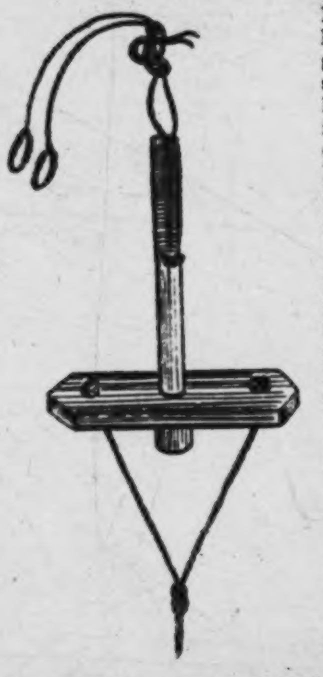


FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524] A riddle—'He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falconry:[1]

539
223

The Song of Netturgundi

Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

---

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Pardhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. FISHING

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *harangra*, *ndri* (or *bilam*), *bots* (or *khokes*), *dundum*, *lesse* (or *tera*) and *bigum*. 825 821 614

The gall-bladder of the *bigum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by illing it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is eeded, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, s removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient o drink. 278

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
ook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

226
227
[524]

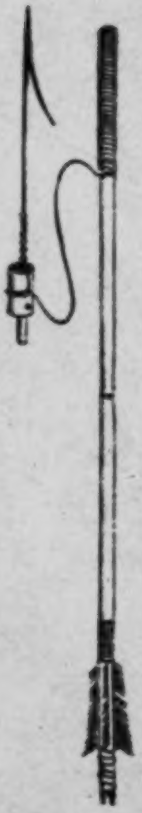
worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.

Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *māndar* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *palna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundha* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *telai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundha*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *utād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:



[539] FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21"

Thāpa le thāpa, māchh mārjya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho leka manke, bāte nawan chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chodiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

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[1] This trap resembles the Fenland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Fenland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chairs in Fenland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 178 and 1936, p. 179.

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 226
21 feet long. 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Natânek horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: [524] It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. 226
The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them
into the water. 278 The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking 226
for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught
they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, 776
be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a 782
very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. LIQUOR

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit 273
is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this
reason is greatly honoured. 273 The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the
Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] 824
The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy 273
aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 883

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[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.

[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

273 [883] of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and ~~drink it in~~ honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

[415]

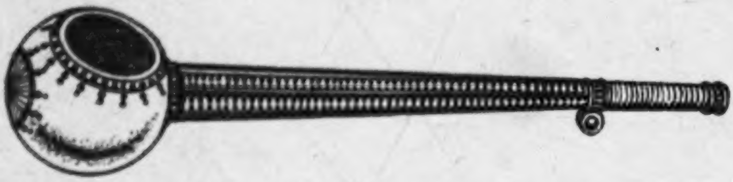

FIG. 13. Brass *orki* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

273 656 This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

439 [435] [674] However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937-41, are these:

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[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.

[2] This was in 1941.

674

Tahsil	Population in 1941	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	Total
Kondagaon ..	111,428	3	1	1	..	6	11
Narayanpur ..	62,305	13	..	2	..	3	18
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	16	4	14	5	26	65
Dantewara ..	90,345	58	20	35	10	20	143
Bijapur ..	25,587	4	17	29	18	23	91

Such a table does not, of course, mean quite what it says. An increase in the number of cases detected may imply greater zeal on the part of the Excise and Police staff rather than an outbreak of illicit distillation. Moreover, as the Excise Officer writes to me, 'The number of cases detected represents only a small fraction of those actually occurring, especially in the south of the State'.

Yet even so, the contrast between the Muria of the north and the more civilized Muria of Jagdalpur and the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Bijapur is striking. In the ghotul, the peace-loving Muria are taught to observe the laws.

On the other hand, the incidence of the consumption of mahua spirit in 1942 was greater in the Narayanpur Tahsil than anywhere in Bastar. There is only one way of calculating this, and that is on the basis of the licence fees, which are in turn based on the presumed out-turn of the still; such figures cannot be altogether reliable, but they give at least some indication, as the following table will show: 273

Tahsil	Population in 1941	Presumed out-turn in gallons	Consumption per 100 of the population in proof gallons
Kondagaon ..	111,428	36,137	32·43
Narayanpur ..	62,305	36,700	58·90
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	63,581	26·84
Dantewara ..	90,345	42,000	46·48
Bijapur ..	25,587	11,275	44·06
Sukma Zamindari	47,914	24,200	50·51

The Muria recognize the danger of drinking to excess, and indeed they have few drunkards. 'Liquor is dangerous, even a wise woman falls through drinking.' 'An out-still in the village—quarrels in the ghotul.' But it is irresistible. 'At first it tastes nasty, but afterwards you know it for the sweetest thing on earth. You would sell everything to get it.' There is a song about drunkenness:

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Gond bond bhaisa pond
Lai hadri hatin pond,
Kalār halārin chuniya chor,
Ghar ghar mangai burga jor.

273 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo, which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his 539 wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotla, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they 273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

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[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

Plate XIII

516
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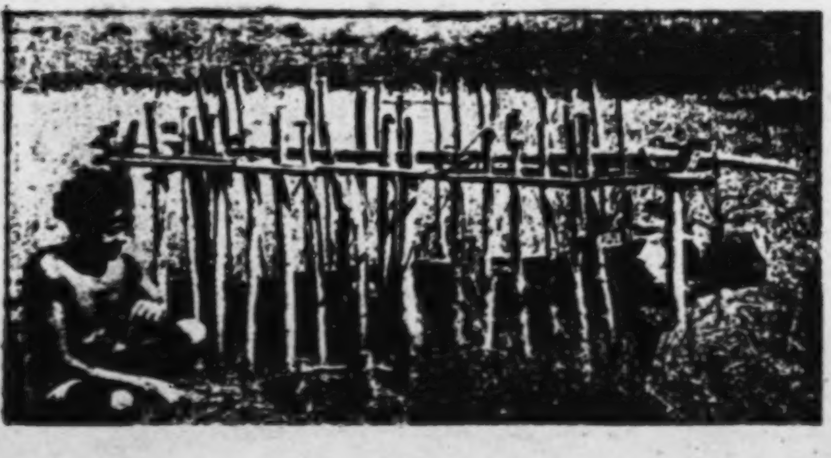
Chelik of Masora roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohator

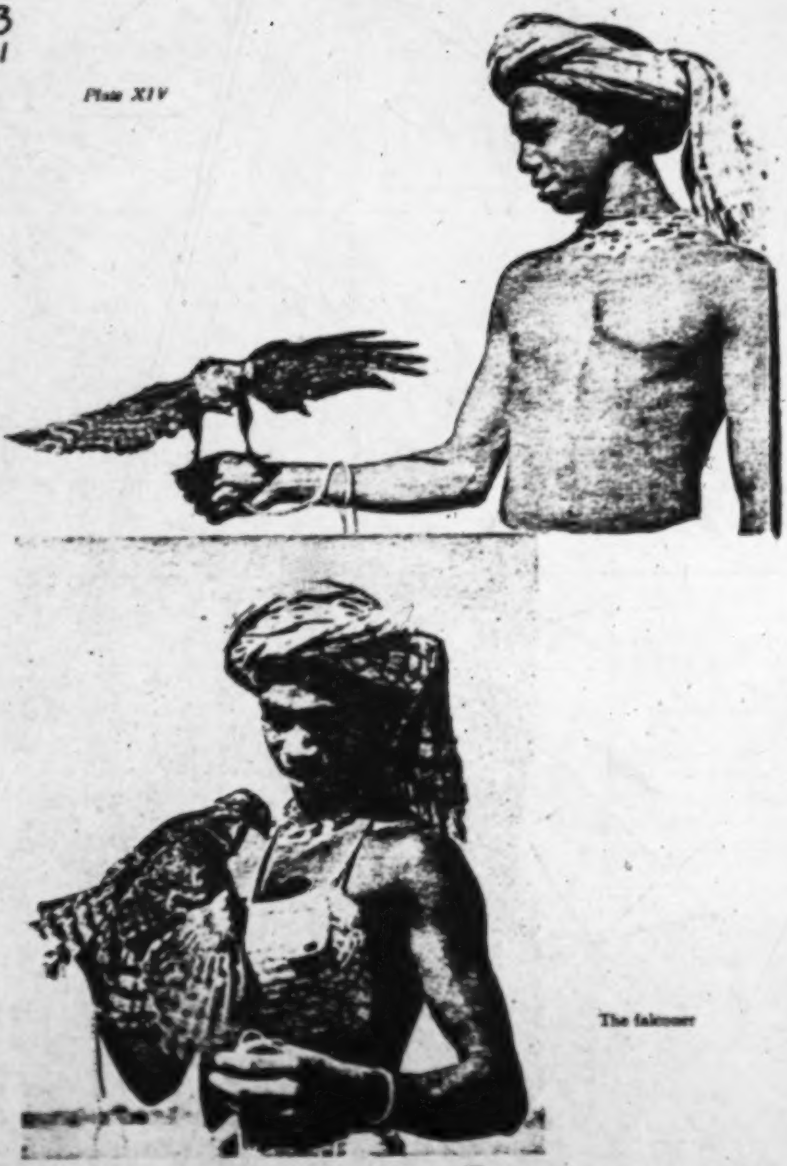
224



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223
231

Plate XIV



The falconer

[p. 52 (R)]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya wāto gorga ale māmdle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 538 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

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[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

824 538 [524] buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

[782] This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharagaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

245 The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds. 245

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. 273
For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman [843]
or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in [841]
her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot. 824

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and then fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken. 245

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

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[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 95ff.

245 Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

824 Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

755 164 For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

824 [262] The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

273 The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

245 When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Talhur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

245 423 Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

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[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 17f.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting 245
it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially
when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the 423
villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels 273
in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and 462
motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to
share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated? 883

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *masni* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhuair grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long 883 462 784 labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. [412] She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

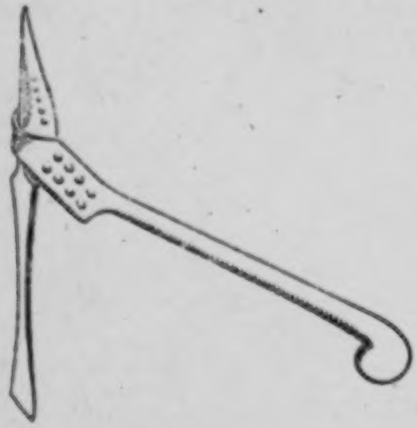

FIG. 14. *Baras or talli used for cutting up meat and planing wood*
Length of upright 9"

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, [791] though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were [584] complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

I. The Clan System

An elaborate discussion of the clan system of the Muria would be out of place and not very profitable, for it is impossible to bring any kind of order out of the confusion into which that system has fallen in modern times. But some account of the clans and their rules must be given, for they are of real importance to the children in the ghotul and a breach of the clan-rules may merit not only the vengeance of the Departed but severe punishment from the leaders of the ghotul and of the tribe. The clans regulate the absorbing question of marriage and the still more absorbing relationships of chelik and motiari. Their distribution directs to some extent the annual dancing expeditions. The clan festivals are among the most exciting and colourful incidents in the ghotul's life.

I will therefore briefly outline the clan system—though it must be remembered that it is not really a system—and I will then give a few stories about the origin of these clans and finally an account of the rules and customs that are observed.

The clan system of the Muria is now greatly confused. In the old days it seems probable that the inhabited territory of north Bastar was divided up among the different clans of Maria and Muria, and each had its own particular *bhum* or clan area. In each *bhum* there was a spiritual capital called the *pen-rawar* or *pen-kara*. Here lived the clan-god or Anga with the clan-priest to tend him and mediate between him and his kinsmen. Here they came for the chief festivals of the Anga; here they brought their dead and erected their menhirs; here they gathered for the special panchayat that discussed offences against the clan laws.

Traces of this organization exist, but the increase of population, the occupation of vast new tracts of land, the scattering of the clansmen in all directions has destroyed the clear pattern of former days. Many Muria have never visited their *pen-rawar*, many are living in *bhum* that really belong to other clans, most clans have *bhum* rights in villages that are widely apart. There are no longer compact clan areas, and in every village—though each is regarded as the *bhum* of some special clan—there live members of several other clans.

It was this fact, of course, that made the ghotul, in its Muria form, possible. Among the Hill Maria, where the old one-clan-to-one-village system still survives,[1] girls are not allowed to share the dormitory with the boys because of the obvious danger of clan incest.

The Muria, then, preserve the old traditions but in a confused and disorderly way. Many clans have more than one *pen-rawar* and several gods. The Naitami clan, for example, has spiritual headquarters at Kharkagaon, Kabonga, Chingnar and Sirpur; the Poyami clan worships Samrath Dokara—an Anga—at Sirsi, as well as Budha Pen at Lanjora and Chingnar. The Dhurwa clan has a clan-god, Son Kuar, at Metawand and another, Budha Dokara—an Anga—at Kharkagaon. The Sori clan worships Budha Pen at Chingnar, Kara Hurra at Garanji and Lalit Kuar at Gorma.

In each case, however, there is one ancient *pen-rawar*, to which the more orthodox elders of the tribe go when they can and where they will have their

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[1] See Grigson, op. cit., pp. 236ff.

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kando clan (which has its *pen-rawar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-rawar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

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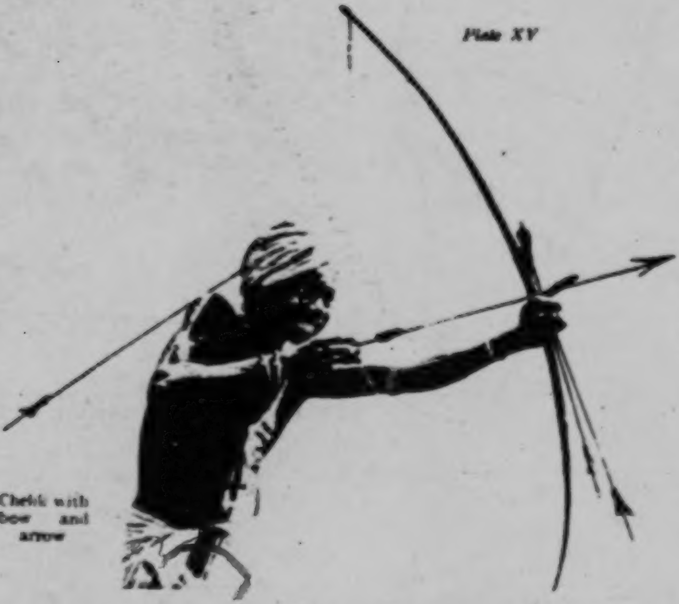
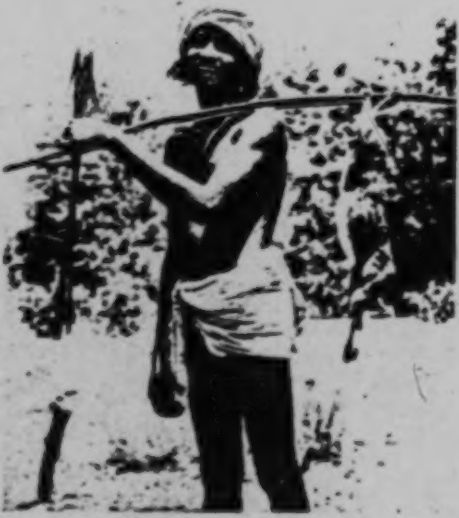
[1] See p. 204.

Plate XV



Chelik with bow and arrow



Returning from the ceremonial hunt

[p. 60 (A)]

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Two motiari
from Kapsi

Plate XVI

The Belosa of the
Bhanpuri ghotul

[p. 60 (B)]

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

CLAN	TOTEM	CLAN	TOTEM
The Nag (Cobra) Phratry			
Buyi	Bullock	Maravi	Goat
Dhurwa	Goat	Kassi Maravi	Kassi tree
Duga	Cobra	Etikal Maravi	She-goat
Kalo	Cobra	Nei Nuroti	Dog
Karanga	Wild buffalo	Nuroti	Cobra
Kaudo	Goat and horse	Partabi	Goat
The Kachhim (Tortoise) Phratry			
Kawachi	Tortoise	Parchapi	Tortoise
Komra	Tortoise	Poyami	Tortoise
Markami	Tortoise	Tekami	Tortoise
Naitami	Tortoise and dog		
The Bakra (Goat) Phratry			
Gaude	Goat	Ori	Goat
Karhami	Goat	Uika	Kassi tree
Komra	Goat	Wadde	Goat and kassi tree
Kunjami	Goat		
The Bagh (Tiger) Phratry			
Sori	Tiger, buffalo and bod fish		
Wadder	Buffalo		
The Bodmink (Fish) Phratry			
Halami	Bod fish	Kuhrami	Kassi tree
Hurpundi	Bod fish	Kumoti	Kumot bird
Kachlami	Kassi tree	Usendi[1]	Usi bird

I have somewhat arbitrarily divided the clans into these five phratries, though we must not suppose that this is how the Muria usually thinks of them. In each area he is only concerned with the relatively small number of clans in his own neighbourhood. When Dhanuram, my Usendi assistant from north-west Narayanpur, went to Kondagaon Tahsil, the Kuhrami and other related clans did not recognize him as one of themselves, for they had never heard of the Usendi—which is a great clan of the Abujhmar and north-west Bastar.

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[1] Russell and Hiralal put the Usendi clan in the Kachhimvans. Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 63.

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There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhūm* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

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There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

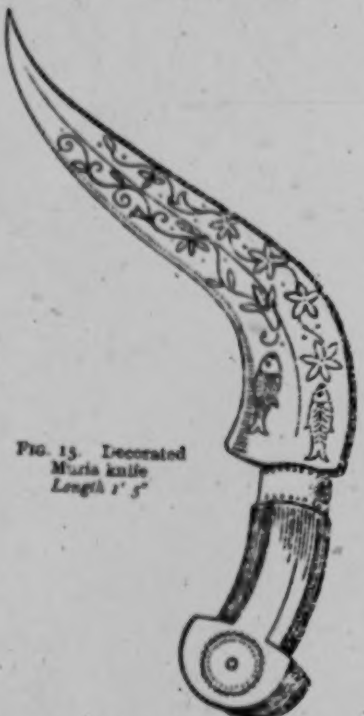

FIG. 15. Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

[411
531]

Those who kindle fire in the field are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

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Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told that this first great journey was the coming of Lingo with his brothers to the earth. This is the Alor version of the tale. 614

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[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grigson, op. cit., p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277f.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

> At the beginning of the world, after Lingo and his brothers had put the earth in order, heaping up a mountain here and hollowing out a river there, the earth began to weep crying, 'There is no one to serve or worship me'. But Lingo and his brothers said, 'Do not distress yourself, we will go to find a priest for you'. 614 559
>
> Then Lingo took his brothers to Lanjhi and Dhamda. In Lanjhi Raja Naitam was living. He had seven sons and seven daughters. Lingo came to them and said, 'The earth is ready in the Middle World and we have come to take you there'. When they heard that, Raja Naitam and Raja Markam with their sons and daughters and their subjects, Sori, Kawachi, Poyami, Kuhrami and Kaudo, set out with Lingo and his brothers to the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had many possessions and they travelled more slowly, lagging behind the others.
>
> After a time they came to a great river. Lingo and his brothers said to themselves, 'We are gods and can cross without difficulty, but how are these human beings to get over?' On the bank tall grass was growing and Lingo and his brothers made it into a rope and stretched it across the river. The subjects clung to the rope and got across, but they were jealous of the two Rajas who were coming behind and, once they were safely on the far bank, they cut the rope. Then Raja Markam and Raja Naitam not knowing that the grass was cut began to cross, but under their weight the rope went down and they sank up to their necks in the middle of the river and stood there weeping. The *dandai* fish, who is the king of all the creatures that live in water, heard the sound and sent a tortoise to save them, and since then the Markami and Naitami honour the tortoise as their god.
>
> At last the whole party reached the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had brought their cattle with them, and they offered a black calf to Mother Earth and pleased her greatly. These are the old priests of the Earth. All the gods have come from Lanjhi-Dhamda except Danteshwari and Maoli, who came from Warangal.

There are endless versions of this tale. In Lanjora a member of the Naitami clan said that,

> At the beginning of the world a brother and sister on their way to a certain village came to a great river. The sister went ahead and reached the other side. Then a flood came down and the boy was left behind. Each wept on opposite sides of the stream. Then came a tortoise and asked the boy why he was weeping. When he told his story, it took him on its back and began to swim across. Half way across, the tortoise sank, but as the boy was drowning a dog came from the far bank where the sister was standing and swam out to him. He caught the dog's tail and was dragged to safety.

This story obviously attempts to explain how it is that the Naitami clan, which is named after the dog (*nai* is the Gondi word for dog) yet honours the tortoise as its totem. Many Naitami, however, have a special reverence for the dog as well.

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Another very common variation of the legend is that told by the Hirko clan:

> When the first twelve brothers came to Bastar from Warangal, they came to a great river and decided to have their midday meal before crossing. Six of the brothers said, 'The river may flood; let us eat our food quickly' and they mixed their rice with water, ate it and went ahead. The other six mixed ghee in the rice instead of water and it took a long time to cook. As they were waiting for it to be ready the river came down in flood and, unable to cross, they sat on the bank and wept. Then came a tortoise and asked them what was the matter. When they told their story, the tortoise said, 'Will you worship me and never eat my people if I take you over?' They swore to do so and the tortoise carried them across on its back, and ever since these six brothers honour it as Bara Pen. In Dongar, Bara Pen used to go from place to place in the form of a tortoise.

Other clans are connected with the bod fish.[1] Members of the Halami clan at Gorma described how,

> There was a great tank in the jungle and below it was a village. The people of that village thought that if the banks were to break they would all be drowned and they decided to make a channel to carry the water away in another direction. Hearing this Kana Pen came to the place and camped below the tank. 'I will break the bank,' he said to himself. By his magic he put all the Muria to sleep and then broke the banks and the water poured out. Kana Pen saved himself by clinging to the root of a tree, but as the water poured over him the bod fish came, angry and saying, 'I will eat one of the eyes of whoever has dried up my tank'. It caught Kana Pen and ate one of his eyes and since then Kana Pen has been one-eyed. Since that day we worship him and with him we worship the bod fish in order to stop it eating his other eye.

Another clan which in certain places honours the bod fish is the Sori. At Masora members of this clan had a slightly different version of the story. Here they regarded Kana Bod as a man.

> The people of the village went to a nearby river to make a bridge. They had iron spades, but Kana made a wooden one. When the others began to dig out the stones, Kana sat idly on the bank. The others got tired, but the bridge was not yet ready and they shouted to Kana, 'Now come and work yourself'. So he took his wooden spade and began to dig. As they watched him the others said to themselves, 'If we kill this man and throw him in the river, then the bridge will soon be ready'. When he heard them Kana jumped into the river and was carried away by the water. A great fish caught him and ate one eye. After that Kana Bod turned into a fish and we have worshipped him as a god.

The Sori clan is actually the tiger clan (*sori* means tiger in Gondi), but it is connected with bees and buffaloes as well as with tigers and bod fish. In

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[1] The bod fish is regarded as specially sluggish in Chhattisgarh and is often compared to a drunken Kalar. See R. B. Hiralal, 'Why Kewat Women are Black', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX (1931), p. 35.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

Karikhodra, a member of this clan described how his ancestors were born from a tigress: 539

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> Two children were born: one brother was a tiger, one was a human being. When the boy grew up, one day he was going to the fields with eleven other men. A tiger came by and asked each in turn, 'Who are you?' Each of them, knowing that the tiger would not kill its own child, said, 'I am Sori' and it spared them. When it came to the real Sori boy it was angry and said, 'You can't all be Sori' and ate him. Ever since we have been angry with the tiger that betrayed us, and when a tiger is killed we put an egg and a pice in its mouth.

In Sidhawand I recorded yet another story of the origin of the Sori clan.

> The twelve Sori brothers went to get honey in the forest. The tree where bees lived stood beside a stream and the shadow of the hive could be seen in the water. Eleven of the brothers seeing the shadow in the water tried to reach it, but they fell in and were drowned. The twelfth brother looked up and saw the hive; so he climbed the tree and got the honey. In this way the Sori clan came into being.

In Cheribera the Maravi clan trace their origin to an incident in Chingnar.

> In Chingnar a Marar dug a well but could not reach water. Presently a tortoise came out of the well and everyone said, 'It must be a god'. Then the tortoise came to the Marar in a dream saying, 'I am Bara Pen, I will give you water in your well and a son to your wife if you worship me'. The next day the Marar took a goat to offer to the tortoise but it refused the sacrifice saying, 'I must have a cow'. This the Marar refused to give. So the tortoise said, 'I will stay no more with you, I will go to the Muria'. The Muria gave the tortoise a cow and thus became Maravi (for Bara Pen came to them from the house of the Marar), but because the Marar offered a goat, the Maravi do not eat goat.

Other stories throw light on the way in which some clans possibly did originate—through dreams and the divisions of families as well as by migration. In Silati village, the Naitami told us that,

> Long ago an old Muria widow lived with her son. When the boy was old enough he was married, but the next day he died and they broke the girl's bangles. The girl and her mother-in-law were weeping bitterly, but at last the husband came to the girl in a dream saying, 'Worship me as Dulha Deo, and I will go on being your husband'. The next day she made offerings to Dulha Deo and from that time he used to come daily to her by night till a son was conceived and born. The elders of the village came to the girl and asked whose child it was. 'I have been to no one,' said the girl, 'It is the child of Dulha Deo.' They were all laughing at her when the dead boy came out of the house and they realised that it really was Dulha Deo who had given the child. So we Naitami call ourselves *rāndike sant* (born of a widow) and our women do not wear bangles.

From the same place I recorded a story explaining why the Naitami and the Poyami, though both having the tortoise as their totem and both being descended from the same parents, can yet intermarry in some villages:

> During a great famine, a Poyami was dying of hunger and went to a Naitami's house to beg for food. The Naitami said, 'There is no food

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here, I can give you nothing'. But the Poyami said, 'At least keep my daughter to work in your house and give me a little food'. So the Naitami fed him and kept the daughter in payment. When the time came for redeeming the girl the Poyami had no money, so the Naitami kept the girl and married her. From that girl there was born a daughter who was Naitami and from her brother there was a son who was Poyami. These two married, for the girl was *dudh-bahini* to the boy.

III. Clan Rules

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Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin, often, too, on something that has happened, probably really happened, to a member of the clan.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as *dādābhai*. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the *akomāma* relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it, and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning just as they would if a human being of their own clan had died.

Thirdly, there are a number of special rules such as that forbidding the members of the Naitami clan to wear bangles.

Among the food rules, some are clear enough. None of the members of the Bakravans or Goat phratry may eat goat's meat. We have seen that there is an added reason for this among the Maravi because, in the story of their origin, the Marar from whose house the tortoise emigrated offered it a goat. When a goat dies the Maravi perform funerary rites for it; they will not even touch the water from which a goat has drunk. This rule is taken very seriously. Twenty years ago in Palari one Bhaira Maravi ate goat's flesh by mistake and died of it, his throat swelling and choking him. Raghunath Maravi also ate it by accident, but he sacrificed a pig to Mati Pen and a buffalo to Bara Pen and was saved, though his brother died. In Kondagaon a man of the Partabi sept ate a goat and was very ill. He was excommunicated and only readmitted to the tribe after paying a heavy fine.

The members of the Kachhimvans or Tortoise phratry avoid eating the tortoise and worship it. The Naitami clan in addition to honouring the tortoise revere the dog, which they regard as their elder brother. Members of the Sori or Tiger phratry, however, have a buffalo totem, since members of the clan consider that they were betrayed by the tiger who ate the original member of their clan. But they still refuse to kill a tiger, and when one is killed they perform funerary rites for it.

Members of the Nagvans or Serpent phratry are supposed to be immune to the bite of the cobra, but some of the members of this phratry also honour other animals. For example, the Karanga has the wild buffalo as its totem and the Nei Nuroti has the dog.

Members of the Usendi clan which, being a Hill Maria clan, does not fit easily into any of the Muria phratries, do not eat the *usi* bird. The Kaudo sept has to avoid the horse: its members may not ride a horse or touch it. If a horse is tied in front of a Kaudo house, it goes mad or dies. The Komra sept never cut down a kassi tree, nor do they eat its leaves as vegetables. They must not cook roti with oil, and at the New Eating ceremonies they

Plate XVII

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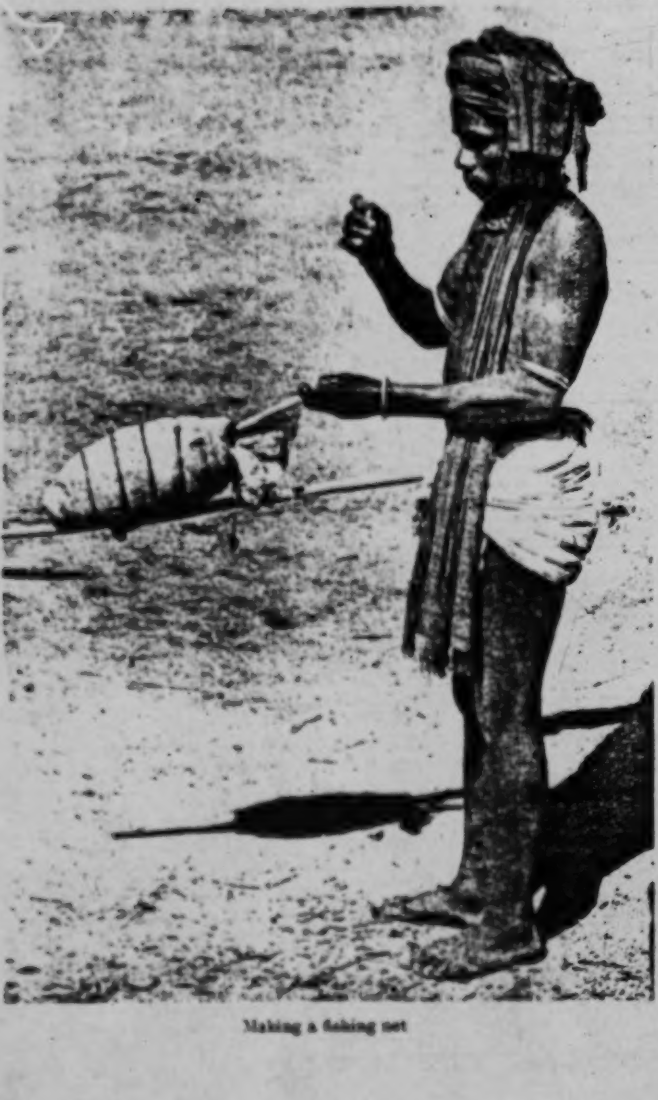

Making a fishing net

[p. 66 (A)]

Plate, XVIII

Chelik at Temrugaon fishing with rod and line from a specially prepared pier

Chelik setting dundia and dandar traps in a small stream

[P. 66 (B)]

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. THE FAMILY

582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomáma* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

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[1] See p. 127.

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue: with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *mandari* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *mawriye* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes [835] together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*ange*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice. 607
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one *is* going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. SUMMARY

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burha in jāwa unddna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some
842 evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead.
789 A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform
spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The
Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of
the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we
promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Hus-
842 band and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of
Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and
578 still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me
saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel
[586] miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages
examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out
843 of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (inter-
course), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can
to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth
month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for
'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to
space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it,
she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and
Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months,
and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'.
But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puer-
perium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them?
But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is
843 interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements.
The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong
844 and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, 843
occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The
Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth, 844
when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the
mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment.

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, 843
though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu
influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion.

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child 844
must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed
is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, 844
and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump
falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on 787
which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During
this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done.

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

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[1] Compare with the very simple Muria tradition the elaborate regulations of the more sophisticated tribesmen of the Central Provinces described in my article, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills'. *JASB*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 99–148.

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman. [524]

Chipta upre jai phar,	There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar?	How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jānwar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky. [777]

Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamia* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *hera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'. [177]

II. NAME-GIVING

553 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, 553
and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors
has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are 775
adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Karikhodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, 551
though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Beya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukdu	Wizened
Bohber	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity and sorrow have visited a family; if two children have died, the parents hope to avert another disaster by calling the next one Hagru (excreter) and so on. Laudatory names are much more common.

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[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sakli, Sugria.

Anjori	Splendour	Dularsingh	Lovable
Amoli	Invaluable	Hirasingh	Handsome as a diamond
Amarsingh	Immortal		
Bahadur	Brave	Labarsingh, Laharu, Lahari	Happy
Balsai	Young King		
Bansingh	Lord of the forest	Ruprai, Rupsingh or Rupa	Silver
Birsingh	Brave		
Budha	Wise and learned	Sobi	Beautiful
Dhansingh, Dhanu	Rich	Sugru	Beautiful
		Sunher	Golden

A few Muria are named after trees and vegetables.

Amori	A tree	Jira	A red vegetable
Baranga	A tree	Jhitka or Jhitu	A shrub
Dhodra	A hollow tree	Kanda	A root
Guthlu	Mango seed	Kehala	A tree

Others are named after animals, birds and fish.

Baghrai	Tiger	Maliyarsingh	Peacock
Bhainsa	Buffalo	Malsai	Peacock
Bharanda	The broom-tailed (probably a tiger)	Mendi	She-goat
Domi	A fish	Mugur	Crocodile
Dulu	A fish	Newra	Mongoose
Gundru	A small bird	Paddi	Pig
Kawe	A bird	Pitorka	Bulbul bird
Kidar	A bird	Suksi	Dry fish
Liti	Sparrow	Usir	A bird
Maina	A starling	Yerjaha	Bear

Another class of names is taken from musical instruments and other material objects such as Erra (a sickle), Nagel (a plough), or Gota (tobacco-box).

Bajo	Fiddle	Dhol	A drum
Balo	A sort of violin	Kudurka	Wooden gong

Disease-names are either given when the child is grown and are purely descriptive, or they are prophylactic, given in the hope that the bearer of the name will not be afflicted with the fact.

Dutha	A leg disease	Khoru or Khoriya	Lame
Kodi	Leprous	Konda	Dumb
Thota	Cripple	Gaja	Ringworm

Names deriving from physical characteristics are more in the nature of *paske podor* or nicknames, though names based on colour are probably given when the child is a baby.

Bhuri	Fair, light brown	Chhendi	Long-haired
Bhusku	Fat	Chirangu	Curly-haired
Bijju	Impotent	Denga	Tall
Bondka	With a long navel	Derha	Left-handed
Botori	Undersized	Dhonya	Big-bellied
Bulte	Fat-faced	Hetka	Stammerer
Chemtu	Dry-faced	Jatiya	Long-haired

Jalgi	Curly-haired	Meso	Black
Kari or Kariya	Black	Milku	Short-sighted
Koso	Black	Mondi	Crippled
Limtu	Short-sighted	Mundra	Hairless

Other nicknames, of which there are a great variety, may be represented here by—

Bode	With a big shaking stomach	Karbe	Burnt in the fire as a child
Dahko	A fast walker	Pakla	Grey-haired
Dalu or Daru	A heavy eater of pulses	Pitarri	One who quickly loses his temper and talks very fast
Dorga	Big-bellied		
Garbari	Always bustling about		
Golar	Always wanders like a bull	Potsu	Stout
		Udlin	A girl who eloped from the ghotul.

Of the 2000 names collected, we may make the following classification:

	Number	Percentage
Specifically Hindu names ..	85	4·25
Hindi or Halbi names ..	820	41
Names of probable Gondi origin ..	1095	54·75

These figures are, I suggest, sufficient to reinforce Grigson in his criticism of Russell and Hiralal for their statement[1] that names from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and that it was only after contact with the Hindus that the Gond took to having individual names. Grigson found that out of 267 names collected from the Maria only 5 per cent were Hindu.[2] But he does not give the percentage of names that a Hindu might conceivably use.

The following Muria names[3] may not all be Gondi, but no ordinary Hindu would use them:

Bindo
Boga
Boko
Bosa
Bui
Chahra
Chepu
Chirga
Chogu
Dirka
Dirwi
Duge
Durru
Gannu
Gecho
Gile
Gulu
Gurti
Hirdu
Jaggu
Jainu
Jakkar
Jako
Jamni
Jauge
Jelu
Jepi
Keso
Korge
Kosi
Kule
Kundel
Leske
Malo
Mirdu
Mitku
Muke
Nappu
Nargo
Orcha
Orsu
Ote
Pakur
Picho
Pite
Pitsa
Poke
Pola
Poriya
Sankoy
Silo
Singa
Sudu
Tahtor
Temsu
Thiblu
Tuge
Turku
Udlu
Wandel

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[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 87.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 266.

[3] Hislop gives the following specimens of Muria names, which I reproduce because they are the earliest we have. 'Names of males: Badal, Bukal, Boyal, Dhela, Dhodi, Dorgo, Gagaru, Godi, Higal, Judahal, Kodal, Malal, Mulal, Milol, Musial, Odhi, Pichka, Samaru, Surka, Soval. Females: Gajeri, Hinga, Judahi, Kodo, Kasi, Sukali.' Hislop, op. cit., p. 24.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned
854 at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, 857 the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

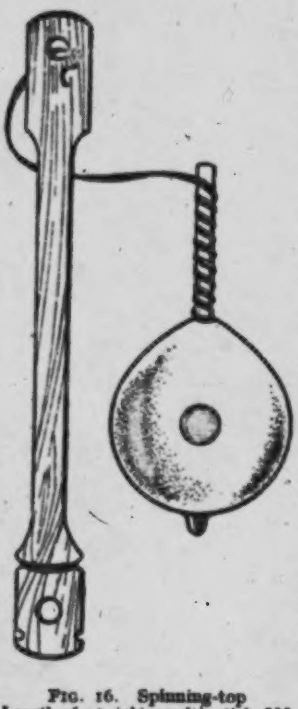

FIG. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¾"

854 It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. [524] The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

857 From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

881 The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

304 The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are 304
betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can
demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks
are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Maha- [775]
purub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the
Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother
or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the
brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua
oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done
by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal profes-
sional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of
tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In 773
Narayanpur the Ojha described how 304

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

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[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralál, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were [illegible]37 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

> 773 304 Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

> Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.
>
> In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

304 386 The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

304 The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

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[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.*' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 168ff.

Plate XIX

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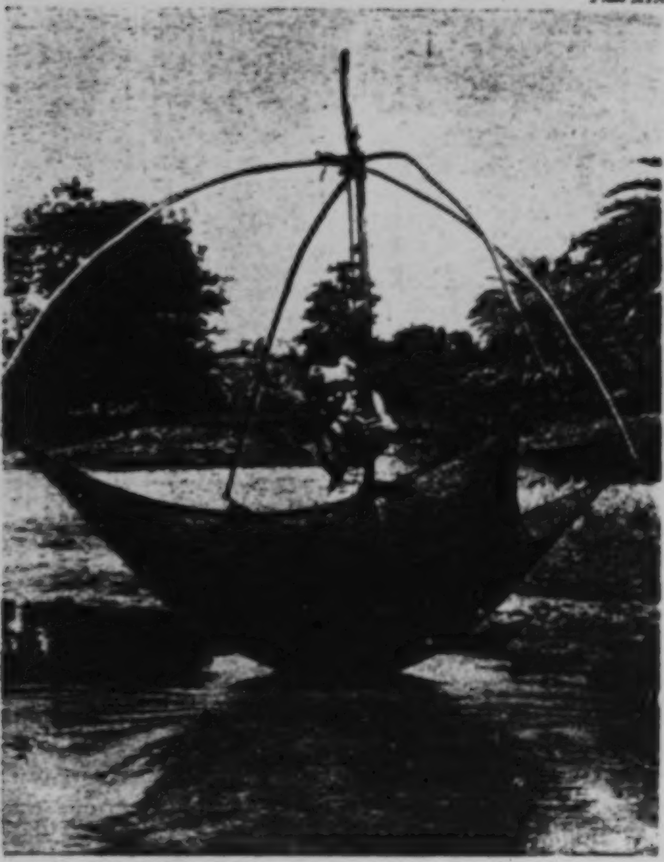
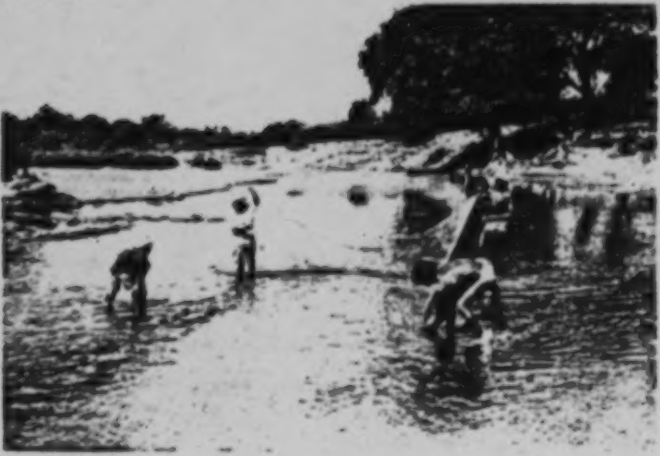


Dasru at Markabera with his charged net

[p. 78 (A)]

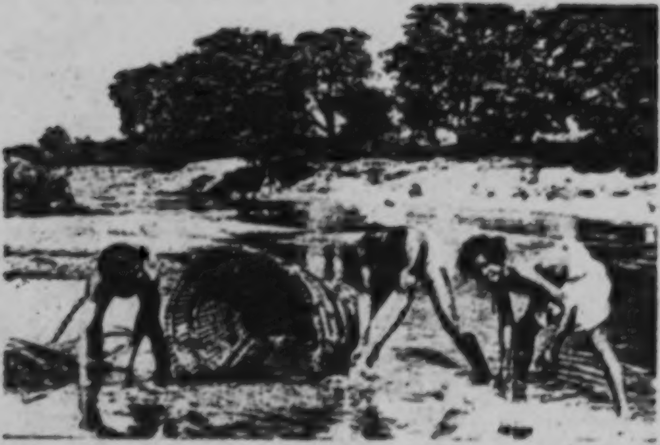
Plate XX

226
227



Chelik at Kotlibera fishing
with a net

Boys setting a somuri trap
in the River Kotri



[P. 78 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 522 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

324 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to cool the pain of the marks.

539

Arji binthi mān hamdra.	Listen to our prayer.
Us dinki bachan tumdra.	Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujiki jhār udhāra.	Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godende āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godende muni.	If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin muni?	What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya.	The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Dudr barhāte rale āya,	I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasale āya	She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya.	I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mole re muni?	How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nito āgar dugāni wo āya.	Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagāāing dumhi dai?	Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumhing dai.	From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wātāng dai?	Why have they come here?
Singār koti wātāng dai.	They have come to tattoo you.
Singār koti punong dai.	They don't know how to tattoo.
Danda mola kintāng dai?	What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāsi punong dai.	They don't know how to use the needles.
Māt mola kowom dāi.	We won't pay their wages.
Māt koti kowāh dai,	If they would let us do it,
Māt singār kotorom dai.	We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

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[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pethar bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. MENSTRUATION

561 Neither in the ghotul nor outside are the age-grades of Muria children very strictly defined. There are, for example, no rites of transfer from one age-grade to another, but generally four different stages in a child's growth to maturity are recognized. The first stage for a boy or girl is babyhood; the boy is called *pila*, the girl *pili* or *noni* (daughter). This stage lasts a year. The child then becomes a *tākna peka* or *peda* (feminine *tākna peki* or *pedi*), the word *tākna* meaning 'a toddler'. This stage lasts for two or three years till the child begins to play about the house and perform little tasks, when it is known as a *leka* or *leki*. At the age of seven or eight the boy becomes a *lāyor peka* or *nangriya*, the second word implying that he is now able to go along with his father behind the plough. A girl of the same age is known as *lāya peki*, *norwa lāya* (meaning 'immature', a girl who does not yet have to wash after her menstrual period) or in Halbi *tāndak pāni ānu leki*. Finally a girl on passing her menarche becomes a *lāya*, *torita*, *tarni*, *dhāngri*. She is now *juwān* or *mast juwān*, mature. A boy too is now called *lāyor*, *dhāngra*, *dinda* (meaning unmarried) or *juwān* (meaning mature).

841 The significant moment in these stages of growth is obviously a girl's first menstruation. This is a crisis of enormous importance to her both socially and psychologically. The fact that she is subject to this monthly cycle sets her as woman in an entirely different category to man. Menstrual blood makes her dangerous, infectious while alive; it may turn her into a ghost of dread and horror after death. A dozen names and expressions for this condition testify to the importance it has in the Muria mind. It will be most convenient to give them in tabular form: all, except the last three, are Gondi.

Pendawoghai	'Her private parts are flowing.'
Kata pongta	'The bank of the field is broken.'
Netur danta	'Blood is flowing.'
Tora pongta	'Blood is flowing.'
Arro āta	'She is taboo.'
Atāna āyo	'She is not cooking.'
Arka chhande kita	'She's in the position of one who may not touch cooking-pots.'
Pirita	'She is wrung out like a dhoti.'
Ghāt utaris	'She can't go to the water-place.'
Bhāta me hona	'To be outside,' i.e. she cannot enter the house.
Dhār bohis	'Blood is flowing.'

The first menstruation is called *yete aria* ('the call to water') in Gondi and *phulsundri* ('the blossoming of the flower') in Halbi.

841 343 In many villages, especially those to the west where the influence of the Abujhmar Maria is strong, the Muria build separate huts where their women can be segregated at this period.[1] Sometimes they make one communal hut for the whole village; sometimes there is one hut for a group of houses; occasionally a big house with a large family has a hut to itself. The Muria do not generally build such huts outside the village, but in some isolated spot within its borders. The huts are usually wretched little buildings with small doors. Inside may be seen a bed, a cooking-hearth, a few pots, some strips of cloth, a little firewood. The hut is built by the chelik—no married man may help—who are paid by the village women with liquor for their services. Every year at

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[1] Among many other villages may be mentioned Sarandi, Chingnar, Kaleparas, Hochur, Padbera and Talabera. The huts are called in Gondi *witte-kurma* (the hut that must not be touched) or *yer meyāna lon* (the hut for bathing in water).

the beginning of the rains only the young chelik in the *nangriya* age-grade may re-thatch the roof. When they have finished, they have to pay a 'fine' of seeds or liquor to the ghotul. Girls must never touch the roof.

The motiari's life in this hut is miserable enough. At Padbera a girl exclaimed, 'You feel as if you were in jail; why has God sentenced us girls to such a punishment as this?' While she is segregated in the hut a girl must not go to a well for water, though she may go to the nearest stream. She must not go about the village for fear that her shadow may fall on a man and destroy him. She may, however, go to the forest for wood or leaves. Another girl at Talabera said, 'When we stay in the hut we always feel very hungry; sometimes we cook for ourselves, but generally the family brings it for us. Someone puts it down outside and runs away. If it is not enough, we cannot ask for more. My knees always ache, my stomach hurts, I feel lazy and unhappy, my head is heavy and in my breast is that *dak dak dak* feeling.' She went on to describe how at night they were very frightened lest some Ondar Muttai attacked them. 'We sit up together comforting one another for many hours. When we dream, we see ourselves singing and playing with the chelik and motiari. When at last we have a dream of the embankment of a tank being repaired, we know that the period is over and we will be able to return home.'

In the centre and east of the State, segregation huts are not erected. Their distribution seems to depend not only on the strength of Maria influence, but also on the style of village architecture. As we move east, we find the houses built with very large and deep verandahs where there is plenty of room for a girl to feed and sleep without coming into contact with the rest of the family. It will generally be found that where special menstruation huts are made, the village houses are small and without adequate verandah space. This is one of the reasons why the Hill Maria make a special menstruation room in their houses, even where they do not make a special hut.

But although the girls are less strictly isolated and their lot is thus less wretched than where they have to spend their days and nights away from everyone, the taboos controlling their work and movements are very strict and are enforced by stringent sanctions. These rules indeed are common throughout India,[1] though adapted to the special circumstances of Muria life. The motiari during her period may not cook or fetch water or touch the grain-bins or approach any cultivated field or clearing for shifting cultivation. If she goes into a field where the rice is sprouting it will never reach maturity. She must not step across even the mark of a plough on the ground. She cannot attend a marriage or festival. She must not go near the shrine of the Village-Mother. If she is present at any occasion where liquor is being distributed, she must not accept it from the hands of a man; another girl takes it for her and hands it to her in a leaf-cup. She must not take part in any games or dances, particularly in any ceremonial dances.

The most stringent taboo is on her relations with men. Sexual intercourse is absolutely forbidden; though the woman does not seem to be affected, the man who goes to a menstruating woman will die. There is no cure for him, magician and priest are alike helpless. He is lost. The woman must not even touch a man or let her shadow fall upon him. Should a man be accidentally touched he is excommunicated and must be purified by passing through 'a ring of fire' before anyone will accept food or tobacco from him.

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[1] For a full account of these, see my paper, 'Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and the Climacteric', *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 141–57.

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [688] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [522] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's 841 period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a poly- 539 gamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls 841 experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody 841 knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty 522 leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche 841 to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

844

The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried

Plate XXI

854
291

Mother with her two children at Phauda

[p. 82 (A)]

585

Ceremonial greeti
of the bridegroom
his relations

585
417

Plate XXII

Marriage booth

[p. 82 (B)]

841 Nahani Deo. In some villages, however, the older women do not allow the girl to go to a stream or tank at all. They bring her water and let her bathe and wash her clothes on a stone in the compound.

We can understand how the rules affecting the menstruating motiari must be particularly strict when we remember that the ghotul is a shrine built by Lingo Pen, still sacred to him, and that the children within its walls are not only specially protected from marauding ghost or evil nightmare, but are also subject to the taboos and disciplines of *le monde sacré*. The girl therefore is forbidden for a period varying from four to seven days to enter the ghotul or even touch its fence. She must never, of course, touch a chelik at this time. If she did, they told us at Kajen, he would go mad. Even if her shadow fell on him while he was drinking, he would fall senseless to the ground. Should a girl go into the ghotul concealing her condition, the ashes of the ghotul fire would scatter in all directions and might continue to do so for two or three days, a sure sign that Lingo Pen is offended. When the culprit is discovered, she must offer a bottle of liquor to the insulted deity.

There is naturally considerable risk that a girl may begin her period during the night or evening while she is in the ghotul. A chelik in Munjmeta described what is done. 'She feels the warm blood, she shows it to her chelik and goes away at once.' 'Once', he said, 'his motiari did not realize what had happened and spent the night in the ghotul. When it was discovered in the morning, he himself was fined three long pieces of wood.'

The motiari is not, of course, allowed to go on the Diwali, Chherta and Mahna Dandar excursions while she is in this condition. If the period only begins after she has started out, she must make an offering to the local god and return home. Should any motiari begin her period at the moment when the chelik are about to start for their Pus Kolang dances, they abandon the trip. If during a boy's absence on this expedition his 'ghotul wife' should menstruate, he is warned of the fact by a dream and must make offerings to Lingo Pen. A chelik may go to the ghotul even while his special partner is in her period, but no one may take tobacco from him. The others tease him, saying, 'Don't worry, she'll be all right in two or three days. Perhaps you dug a little too deeply last night'.

If a girl is to be married, and her period begins on the eve of her marriage, this is postponed for a day; then she takes a bath and declares that officially all is well. Once when I went to Borgaon for a wedding, the bride entered her period on the critical day and the ceremony was postponed. On another occasion, when the omens did not come right, the people made a search through the wedding party to see if any relative was concealing this condition.

841 A girl does not bathe her whole body until the flow of blood ceases, but she
does change and wash her pubic cloth, though she has to be very careful where
515 she puts it to dry for fear a witch should steal it. This cloth must never be
touched by a man. It is either thrown away after every period or hidden
291 in a safe place outside the house. Along the banks of the Boroda river near
Temrugaon I noticed many earthen pots, some floating in a backwater, others
hidden in bushes. These were the pots in which the menstrual cloths were
boiled to get them clean.

841 At the end of the period the girl goes as secretly as possible to a stream for
her bath. She must be careful not to meet any man on this day, for should
515 his shadow fall upon her, her first child will resemble him. In some villages
the girl must take two baths, in others she must take three. After the first
bath she cleans and cow-dungs the room where she will sleep, washes all her
clothes and sprinkles oil and haldi in the house and on her body. She then

841 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to
515 anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria
[842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their
[833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O
841 Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.'
522 Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In
841 Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no
787 one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached
841 to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-
776 wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

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[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

the motiari Hidde who died for love. Unhappily, when the girl committed suicide, she was in her catamenial period. The result is that she is regarded in some places as an untouchable goddess. Some ten years ago, her symbol was taken to the great festival at Keskal, and her Siraha went into the shrine of Bangaram, consort of Danteshwari. The Siraha of Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal stopped them. There was a great quarrel, and Pendrawandin's Siraha took the case to the court at Kondagaon, whence it went in appeal to the Maharaja. He ruled that the goddess was banned from visiting the shrines of Kuar Pat (son of Kanda Dokara), Danteshwari, Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal, but that she might be taken elsewhere. 841 776

All over the State there are stories of the unhappy fate which has befallen those who have broken the menstrual taboos. In the Karikhodra ghotul I was told of a shocking incident in Jatabera (Kanker State) where two menstruous women went to a *dahi*-clearing, picked a cucumber and ate it. A tiger attacked them and killed them both.[1] At Tarabera, Lati quarrelled with his wife when she was in her period and struck her twice. Soon afterwards he hanged himself in his field. 'The Departed were angry with him for touching an unclean woman and drove him to kill himself.' 841

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[1] This rigorist attitude towards the menstruating woman is by no means confined to the aboriginal in India. Thus, to give but one example, M. N. Srinivas describes the traditional outlook of the highest Hindus of Mysore. 'The menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahmin-killing in liquid form.' The degree of defilement varies from day to day. For the first day's impurity a woman will be punished by being reborn as an untouchable, for the second day's as a Brahmin-killer, for the third day's as a washerwoman.' The daughter of the sage Udanka was nightly transformed into a mass of worms because seven lives earlier she had touched some cooking-vessels while in her period.—M. N. Srinivas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore* (Bombay, 1942), p. 129.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. Betrothal

584 THE next critical moment in the life of a Muria is the betrothal. This may be done at any age, before puberty or after it, but it is generally arranged later rather than sooner. It is followed, after a number of years, by the marriage, which is still nearly everywhere adult.

I propose to give in this chapter an account of the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage so that our picture of the course of Muria life may be complete, but I will reserve a discussion of the broader aspects of marriage to Part Two of the book so that they can be considered, where they ought to be considered, in relation to the ghotul.

The betrothal ceremony is called in Gondi *pungār mihchna*, the 'plucking of the flower', *pungār kurki*, 'looking at the flower' and *talk dāyna*, 'going to beg'. These expressions indicate the chief features of the ceremony: the boy's parents make two or even three visits to the house of the future bride, the 'flower' whom the boy will pick and put in his turban.

On the first occasion, before setting out, the boy's father offers liquor in siari leaf-cups to the Departed, one for the boy, one for the girl and one for the Departed themselves. They wait for a time, and if they find one of the leaves has fallen or curled up, they take it that the omens are unfavourable, and either abandon the project or postpone it. In fact, this is the time when the greatest attention is paid to omens.

584 781 Muria omens are specially important before an engagement, on the way to the forest for a hunt and before setting out on a journey. These 'symbols of the future seen in the present'[1] do not influence events, but declare what is about to happen. If the members of a betrothal party see a bad omen on the way they return home because they know it will be a sheer waste of time to proceed; their visit simply cannot be successful.

781 It is through animals especially that the Departed and clan-ancestors warn or encourage the living about the future. 'The Departed', they said at Palli, 'speak through animals telling us to go or not to go.' On a ceremonial hunt, if one of the party fails in some ritual duty to the dead, an offended ancestor may take the form of an animal and attack him as a warning.

Muria omens can be divided quite simply into good and bad.

GOOD OMENS

An usir bird cries *uing-uing* on the left.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the left, saying 'Go, go, your business will succeed'.

A jackal going from left to right. 'The left side is regarded as a centre of greater vitality than the right. Hence the jackal going from left to right means that the animal is going away from the life centre, and thus that a death symbol is being removed.'[2]

A monkey cries *hoop-hoop*. It might be supposed that it was the reference to Hanuman and the sacred monkeys that made this lucky but for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

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[1] W. G. Archer, *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 159.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pitik pitik* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *pichu pichu*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1] 584

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

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[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (op. cit., pp. 147ff and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Turi. 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 590.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Karak and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

584 agrees, they accept the liquor brought and drink it together. If the parents are unwilling, but the girl desires the match, it is said that they usually have to give in to her.

Here too they offer liquor on leaves to the Departed inside the house and watch the leaves to see whether the omens are favourable or not.

At the next visit, the boy's parents bring four baskets of rice and more liquor. The boy's mother washes the girl's feet with liquor and offers a ring. In some villages they drop liquor in the rice-husking cavity; in others they make an offering of cowries or their equivalent to the Pot of the Departed. As they do so, the boy's father says, 'O Departed, accept this offering. We take this girl into our clan and give you cowries in her stead'. At Esalnar the people said that in the old days the Duga sept used to give five cowries, and now give fifteen pice, and the Sori sept used to give three cowries and now nine pice.[1] These are put into the Pot of the Departed. From this day the girl is regarded as belonging to the clan of her betrothed, and must obey its rules and taboos. In some places it is considered proper that a girl should go, even before marriage, for New Eating ceremonies to her future husband's house.

At Chimri I was told that as the boy's parents go home, the motiari stop them and demand 'ring-cowrie', a small present of rings or cowries to compensate the ghotul for the loss that it will suffer when the girl is married. In other places, this is done during the marriage ceremony.

[301]

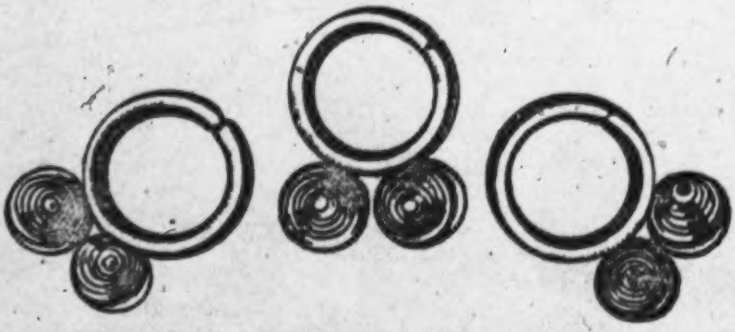

FIG. 17. Brass rings with small bells attached
Actual size

At this second visit, the bride-price is fixed. If the engagement is made many years before marriage the boy's parents generally pay an annual visit to the girl's house, taking her presents of liquor and ornaments.

[801] The bride-price should be in terms of odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. Even numbers are *jori ki jori* and so unlucky: you must have something over a pair. The number nine is also unlucky: a man may die of it.

There are many games about this betrothal ceremony and it is often mentioned in the songs; during their slow tedious dance round the marriage-booth the chelik sing a mixed Gondi and Halbi song about it.

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[1] The Muria clans do not now appear to worship different numbers of gods, but the above practice suggests that perhaps they once did. Ward says that the Gond marriage contract was generally to the effect 'that the father of the bridegroom elect should give the father of the bride as many rupees as he worships Deos (the latter never exceed nine in number, but vary from that number to five)'.—H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 136.

Nihun lewāl wātor nuni.	We have come to take you, girl.	584
Halay dehi jhulay de!	Let us shake her, let us swing her!	539
Jora jāngh la nichat lamay de.	Extend both your legs.	
Chābde re ban ke bendra.	The forest monkey bites.	
Kohom de re ghar ke bilai	The household cat scratches.	
Mahāra dhare jora bichchu.	In the Mahara's house, there is a pair of scorpions.	
Re re loyo rela re re la!	*Re re loyo re re la!*	

II. The Evidence of the Songs

The importance of the betrothal ceremony is shown by the place it holds in the long narrative songs sung in the ghotul or at a funeral. These songs are valuable as revealing in the most authentic manner what the Muria themselves regard as important; they are in fact documentaries in verse. 584 533

I quote here two of these songs, both of which give an interesting account of the course of Muria life. The first is a song used when a menhir is erected. It was sung by Dorga Muria of Dugabangal, a village at the foot of the Abujhmar Hills. In the second song, a Ghotul Pata from Nayanar, is another vivid description of the betrothal. Both in these songs and similar narrative poems given elsewhere in this book, the importance of the ceremony is clearly emphasised.

The Fate of Nirabosi Usendi

In this island of the world lived Kamragatti of the Dhurwa clan. 584
He had a daughter.
There was a boy, too, son of Nirabosi of the Usendi clan. 539
Nirabosi Usendi went to Kamragatti Dhurwa to betroth his son.
He himself went ahead and the brother-clansmen behind.
The Dhurwa asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'I have a daughter, I have not given her to anyone.'
Thus spoke Kamragatti to Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Seeing the bottle of liquor, Kamragatti desired it.
'You are related to me of old, I will give you my daughter.'

The daughter was inside and heard their talk.
She said, 'Many men came for my betrothal, but he did not give me to them.
Today they came and he has given me.'
Thinking thus she was very pleased.
The men drank the liquor and so made an end.
Old man Kamragatti was thinking; he thought, 'I too will give them liquor'.
Amasetiya Kalar and Hiramoti Kalarin had a still.
He went there to fetch liquor.
His daughter came out of the house.
The Usendi asked her, 'Where are you going?'
'I am not going anywhere, I am only coming out of the house.'
'O daughter-in-law, you are so big—why are you not going to someone?
O daughter-in-law, we have come today for your betrothal and you are going out.'
'Men came before for my betrothal, but my father refused to give me.
That is why I am living here and do not go to anyone.'

584 'Hear my word, O daughter-in-law, I have a son, come for him.
Come to the Saturday bazaar, I will send my son there.'
539 The Usendi said thus and the daughter-in-law was ready to go to the bazaar.

The old man Kamragatti brought liquor.
'I have already taken your liquor, now take mine',
So saying they sat and drank together.
They finished the liquor and were ready for food.
They made chicken curry and prepared fine rice.
They finished the food and got up to go.
Usendi said, 'O samdhi, now we must go'.
'It is no use coming once, you must come again;
'My daughter is young; we will drink a lot of liquor.'
Doing Johar to his samdhi Usendi said, 'I will come again'.

Usendi went to his house and told his son, the Garhbangal boy,
'We went for your betrothal and everything is well arranged,
O son, go to the Saturday bazaar and there the girl will come to meet you.'
When his father said this, the boy was silent from shyness.
This Garhbangal boy prepared to go to the bazaar.

Kamragatti's daughter was called Nerum Taro.
As she went round the bazaar, she met the boy.
They were of one face, like brother and sister.
She asked him, 'Where are you living?'
And he replied, 'Where are you living?
I am living in such and such a village, and I am a Usendi boy'.
Hearing this, she told him,
'We have already talked with your father and it is of you we talked'.
'Yes, I am that boy; come girl, come home with me.'
When the Garhbangal boy said this, the girl was ready to go.
The boy went ahead and the girl followed him.
As they went they passed a jungle on the way.
They went into the thicket beneath the shade of a mango tree.
As they rested, the boy said, 'Don't go back to your father's house'.
'I won't go, brother, how can I leave you?'
The Garhbangal boy was very pleased.
He held her arm as though it were a sweet root;
Her bosom was a banyan leaf on which lay two fruits;
He held the breasts and she remained quiet.
Her thighs were stalks of a plantain tree.
He spread them out and did as he desired.

They got up from there and went to the house;
The path was a jackal's bush, the road was a rat's tail.
Talking to one another, they reached the house.
As they came along the road, the sun set.
Garhbangal had a separate house to sleep in;
They reached the house in the dark and lit a lamp;
There was a cot there and they sat upon it.
They were young, they slept together.
As they lay and sat, they did as they desired.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The mother was looking out to see why her son did not return,
She went to ask the folk in the bazaar;
The bazaar-folk said that he had been talking to a girl.
She came home and told her husband saying, 'He has been talking to a girl'.
'I had already told him, that's why I sent him there,'
The Usendi told his wife and she was content.
There was a separate sleeping-place for the Garhbangal boy;
She went there and saw them talking to one another.
Seeing this, she returned and told her husband.
The wife of Nirabosi Usendi said,
'There are two there and they are talking to each other'.
Then they both went there to look.
As he went, the Usendi called, 'Have you come back, O boy?'
When they knew someone was coming, they sat separately.
'O daughter-in-law, you also have come home.'

They took them both into the house.
The old woman lit a lamp to put the tika;
She put tika on the girl and kissed her.
Nirabosi Usendi, holding his stick, went to call the villagers,
'Come brothers, my son has brought a girl;
Let us discuss her, whether she will remain or no.'
So saying the old man brought them all.
'She has come as a *haiwark* girl;
Let us marry her at once.'
All night the marriage ceremony continued until dawn.
The boys gathered holding their drums,
And the girls with their cymbals in their hands.
At dawn they finished the marriage and performed the Lagir,
And the boys danced the Lagir dance.

The old man Kamragatti heard the noise of the dance.
He said to himself, 'Where is my daughter? I must have a marriage for her like that'.
They finished the marriage and finished the tika also.
All day they ate and drank till evening, and the boys were thinking,
'Let us take the bride and bridegroom and put them in their house'.
They took the bride and bridegroom and shut the door;
They took a bottle of liquor and stole a cock;
Boys and girls ate it together.

Old man Kamragatti said, 'Who has carried off my daughter?'
He was grinding his teeth as though his mouth was full of pulse.
When he learnt that Nirabosi Usendi had taken his daughter,
He sent an arrow saying, 'Let Nirabosi Usendi die'.
He sent an arrow of fire and snapped his fingers.

Nirabosi Usendi and his wife died;
Garhbangal, the boy, was weeping *sirk, sirk*.
The whole village gathered there;
The boy went for the samdhi and they all came;
The brother-clans and samdhi-clans gathered.
The samdhi laughing beat the drum;
They buried them both and made a tomb.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

584 All the clansmen went away.
The Garhbangal boy told them,
539 'Come on Wednesday, and on that day we will do the *gaigang* ceremony.
On that day we will put a stone or pole'.
So they did Johar and went away.

The cock-people gave cocks and the goat-people gave goats;
And the clansmen made ready goat and pig.
On that day all the samdhi came.
The dead man's soul was living in a saja leaf,
The samdhi cooked the food to give to the dead man.
After cooking it they carried some of the food to the cross-roads,
They called the soul to eat it;
They offered the *jāwa* and *gāto* in the name of the dead man;
The boys and girls danced with the dhol drums.
They cut a saja tree as a post and placed it in the ground.
The soul came there and that is the house of the dead.

The samdhi went to bring a stone;
They went to the Hill of Panthers for a stone;
Some took a cot and some took poles to carry it.
The samdhi brought the stone;
They brought it to the place where they had put the pillar,
The samdhi saw the place and said, 'This is a good spot'.
So thinking they dug a hole;
They dug two holes with the digging-stick;
There they put the stone of the dead.
From the saja tree the dead man came to the stone;
They put haldi and oil on the stone; they put tika on it.

Those who had cowries gave cowries; those who had money gave money;
Those who had rupees gave rupees; those who had dishes gave dishes;
Those who had pots gave pots; those who had cloth gave cloth.
All these things the samdhi took away.
There they finished the work of the stone of death.
'Go, samdhi, go, let us eat in the house.'
Then came from the dead man's house
All old men and women and chelik and motiari also,
They gave their wages to the chelik of several villages.
The boys went away and they fed the samdhi with beef and rice.
For putting a stone for a dead man, this much only.
The dead man's bazaar is not a small bazaar;
On a Saturday, on that day was the bazaar.
There was a king of the dead, he was a great man;
That Raja made ready to go to the bazaar;
His Rani also was ready to go to the bazaar.

Ghotul Pata: The Marriage of Phulsundor Raja

There were seven wealthy brothers,
They had aged parents.
Six of the brothers went to plough,
The youngest stayed at home doing nothing.
He said to his brothers, 'Go and find wives'.
How shall we go without knowing where to go?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

'Take a bottle of liquor and go for the betrothal anywhere.'
They reached a girl's house.
They gave Johar to the father-in-law,
They gave Johar also to the mother-in-law.
Father-in-law asked, 'Why have you come?'
'There is a flower; for that we have brought liquor.'
'We have a flower, but we have already drunk liquor for another.
Take away your liquor, for we will not drink it.'

For their betrothal they had to go elsewhere.
They saw a girl, they gave Johar to her father.
They gave Johar to her mother.
'Where are you going with that bottle of liquor?'
'We have come for the betrothal of your daughter.'
'I have no daughter; take away your liquor.'

As they searched for girls on their way they reached a house.
They came to a widow's house.
There was a girl there.
'Why have you come with a bottle of liquor?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her.'
'She is my only child; I will not give her to you.
She is to me both daughter and son.'

Leaving that house, the boys went on their way.
They said, 'How are we to find girls for wives?'
There were daughters of Bhagavan;
There were seven sisters and none were betrothed.
The boys went to Bhagavan and gave him Johar.
Bhagavan asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her betrothal.'
'It is true I have a daughter, but we have already drunk liquor for her.'
So said Bhagavan and the boys made ready to depart.

But as they were going, the youngest daughter said,
'O sisters, hear my word.
A year has passed, but my father has not drunk liquor for me.'
The small girl said to her father,
'We are all mature; why don't you accept the liquor?'
Her father said, 'There is no one who has come for your betrothal; how
then can I give you?'
The small girl went to the house where the young men were,
And said, 'Come to my house for my betrothal'.

Father-in-law said, 'There is no mate; why have you come?'
Bhagavan said, 'There is no mate, O daughters'.
The small girl told her sisters, 'There is no mate for us.
What shall we do. There is the Baidar.
Let us ask him about our mates.
Birds and ants combine in pairs, and why not we?
Let us go to the Baidar, for he keeps the accounts of all'.

They then asked the Baidar, 'Are there mates for us or no?'
Bringing his books the Baidar came out.
He brought a book large as a village boundary.

584 He read his book about birth and mating.
He sat and looked at his books.
539 Then said he, 'It is written here.
Reading my books I forgot.
Morning and evening I have read my books
For twelve years and thirteen ages,
All read but none can understand.
Sitting, sitting, I have become hunchbacked'.

At that time the small girl saw the book and laughed.
She tied up that book in her waist-cloth,
She told her sisters, 'Let us go.
Let the papers be; but let us go to the house'.
The small girl took Baidar's papers in her cloth.
Her elder sisters asked her, 'What are you taking in your cloth?
O sister, let us know what it is'.

They gathered round and read the paper.
'It is for our mating and says what should be done.
We cannot win mates unless we go to the Middle World.'
Down to the Middle World they climbed by a silken thread and went towards the east.
They came to a village. 'Where are you, brothers? See, we have come.'
'I am the watcher of my house, I always live at home.'
'O brother, hear my word.'
'What is it? Let me know.'
'Keep us with you, so we will remain.'
'I do not know what to answer; my elder brothers know.
Wait a little till they return home.'

Soon the brothers came and the girls said, 'Brothers, brothers!'
'What is the matter? Let us know.'
'No, it is nothing. Only keep us with you, brothers.'
'All of you may live here if you like.'
The small girl said, 'Let us be divided pair by pair.
The eldest sister for the eldest brother,
The middle sisters for the middle brothers.
And I will live with the youngest brother'.

All then were paired with each other.
They gave a granary-full of rice to be husked;
Somi and Dami husked the rice.
The villagers were called to fetch the liquor.
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
They went to a Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin, beautiful and sweet.
They asked for liquor from that Kalarin,
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
The Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin measured out the liquor.
The liquor was brought and the marriage was performed.
The marriage was finished and they were yoked together.

Living, living, the eldest brother's wife conceived.
Day by day the belly grew; it was made by Bhagavan.
She gave birth to a boy and the Chhati ceremony was performed.
For that ceremony they husked a granary-full of rice.
'Go and bring leaves and fuel for the Chhati ceremony.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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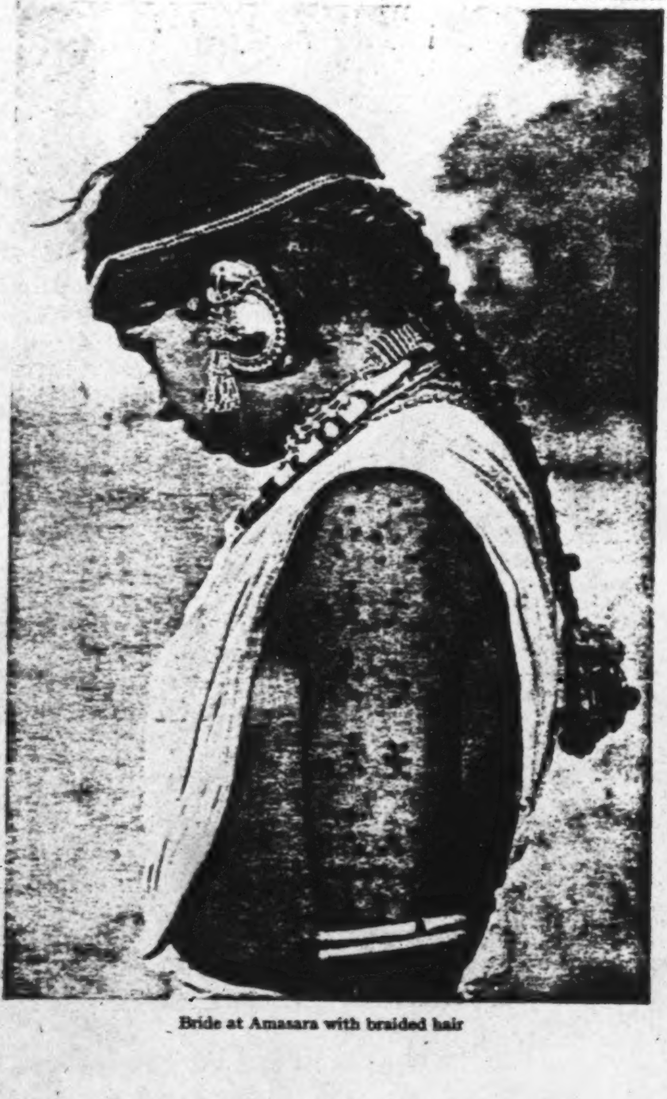
Plate XXIII



Bride at Amasara with braided hair

[p. 94 (A)]

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The bride's bath

Plate XXIV

Chelik fan the bride
dry after her bath

[p. 94 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

584 Five went to the hill for leaves and fuel.
The small girl was lazy, she was sleeping on the road.
539 'O girl, pick the leaves and take them home.'
At that she went away and slept on the rock.
'I am not feeling well, sister, I feel very bad.'
'Why are you feeling ill? What disease have you got?'
'Come here, girl, and lie down and listen:
Whether it be true or false, there is the beating of a drum.'
'No, let us go home, it is for our father's funeral.'
So they went home and told the eldest sister,
'You remain here, we will go for our father's funeral'.

'I too will come with you, O sisters.'
'No, do not come, see how small[1] is your baby.'
'No, I must come, or they'll say, Look the eldest daughter hasn't come.'
She took the baby and went along with them.
'Let us not take the child, let us leave him with the cattle.'
So thinking, they left him with the cattle.

They went on to the funeral.
The baby got up and followed them.
They turned round and said, 'O girl, your baby is coming'.
So they took him with them.
They reached the house and did Johar to everyone.
All wept and they finished the rites of the dead.

The daughter of Gharabundi was Phulsundri Rani.
'O mother, betroth this girl for me.'
'No, son, her betrothal has already been arranged.
They have betrothed her to Oriyal Jhoriyal.'
So he went to his little mother and asked her to arrange his engagement with this girl.
She winked at the boy to come to her.
'Put on some bangles and wear a cloth.'
She has married Raja Phulsundor.
The marriage is done, the liquor is drunk.
They did a Raja-subject marriage[2] hastily.
The Raja caught the Rani's finger and made her sleep inside the house.
He stayed seven days in that village.
The village potter brought his pot to boil the clothes.
In that pot they boiled the clothes and took them to the river.
They threw away the haldi-stained clothes.
But they washed the new clothes and took them out and went.
After bathing they returned to the house.

Both went riding on a horse.
So Phulsundor Raja brought her home.
Reaching home they lived and ate.
Gharabundi went to Oriyal Jhoriyal.
'Phulsundor Raja stole my daughter.'
They searched for them and held a panch.
The panch decided and took the bride-price.

[1] *Yetna*, the word means to hold a little baby with the arm against the breast. The whole line runs in the original—'Niya wâyma bai bâbu to yetna âyore gil gila âtor'.

[2] A Raja-praja marriage is one performed hurriedly, within the limits of a single night and day.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talk dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduized modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

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[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.

[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 468.

[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

bridegroom has to pay up the expenses of the original marriage and sometimes compensation to the original husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. 587
The ceremony is performed inside the house, bride and bridegroom sitting together. The bridegroom puts a cloth on a wooden seat, pours liquor on it and hands it to his bride. She rolls up mango leaves into little *kinwa* and puts them in her ears. There is no dancing, no anointing with haldi, no going round the booth. Visitors place a tika mark of dry rice without the usual oil or haldi.

The Gaita sprinkles the new cloth of the bride with liquor and gives a little sermon: 'O Mahapurub, this man's house has been broken; this woman's house is broken. These two have we elders yoked. O Mahapurub, give them all they need to eat and drink. Let them have sons and daughters. For all their visitors let there be enough.'

Then the newly married pair touch the feet of the village elders who bless them saying, 'Go brother and sister, live well and eat well; may you have children; when we come to visit you, give us a little water. May Mahapurub care for you.'

When a widow is remarried there is the same ceremony, and almost the same words are used except that instead of the reference to the broken houses, the elders speak of the loss of the husband. Should a widow be marrying an unmarried boy—as might easily happen if the girl had been married young—the boy is anointed with haldi and oil, but she is not.

The *dewar* or husband's younger brother has first claim upon a widow and if she marries anybody else, her husband has to compensate him. In some places, there is a formality by which a woman can avoid the reproach of widowhood without actually getting married. In Banjora, for example, 'she need not put on bangles; if she puts *kinwa* of mango leaves in her ears in the name of her *dewar* or her grandson, she is no longer a widow'. At Bopna, when Gagra's father died, his widow put what are called *hāt kinwa* in her ears. As they described the incident to us, 'she said to herself, "Since there is an Anga in our house no one will eat from my hands now I am a widow. I will put *kinwa* in my ears and bangles on my wrists in the name of my *dewar*; if I don't, my relations will fine me and even men of my own house won't eat with me." So thinking, she went to a bazaar, and on her way home she picked a couple of mango leaves, rolled them up and put them in her ears in the name of the bazaar. After that she was no longer regarded as a widow.'

Sometimes old women put these *kinwa* in their ears in the name of their grandsons. 'If there is no husband for you, marry your grandson.' In Gudla, Lakmu's father's brother's mother put *kinwa* for Lakmu. It is generally said that a grandmother can put these ornaments in the name of her own son's own son, that is, her real, and not merely her classificatory, grandson.

Finally, we have the sad and furtive ceremony that is performed when a motiari has the misfortune to conceive. A booth with only five pillars is 585
erected, relations apply haldi to both bride and bridegroom, but the leaf-crown is put only on the bridegroom's head. He has to go alone round the booth for the Lagir ceremony accompanied by a man carrying the marriage kalsa-pot, which represents his wife. They then sit together and tika is made with rice mixed with haldi and oil. A pregnant girl may never go round the booth for the Lagir ceremony.

Irregular marriages, obviously, can be celebrated at any time of the year; but regular marriages are performed only in the hot weather (March to May).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. The Marriage Ceremonies

585 I will now describe in detail the actual procedure of a Muria marriage. This rather tedious task is, I fear, inevitable, for during a wedding the chelik and motiari are on the stage nearly all the time and are rarely seen to better advantage. But to give a coherent account of these marriages is not easy, for—as among the Gond of the Central Provinces—customs vary from village to village and from year to year. Aboriginal marriage procedure seems specially sensitive to outside influence. As we have seen, in northern Bastar the Muria are subject to the influence first of the Abujhmar Maria, then of the Gond of Chanda, Chhattisgarh and Orissa and finally of Hindu traders and officials. In the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka Pargana I found marriage customs vague and uncertain; I got the impression of people playing a part that was new to them, performing ceremonies that were not theirs by long tradition. This is probably because these people are really Maria who have come to settle in the plains—and the Maria have practically no marriage ceremonial at all. The payment of a bride-price, feasting and dancing in the bride's house, the taking home of the bride and closeting her with her husband: such is the simple formula of a marriage in the Abujhmar Hills.

As we move north and east, however, we find more and more complexity and precision in the marriage ceremony. In the Jhorian, Amabera and other northern parganas of Narayanpur, the influence of the Chhattisgarh Gond is clearly seen; marriages are usually held in the house of the bridegroom, the marriage-booth is built inside the compound, and many of the customs remind me of what I have seen in Mandla and elsewhere.

In the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil, Hindu elements are prominent—the use of haldi, the marriage-booth, the sevenfold circumambulation, and many minor details. The most notable difference in custom is that the main ceremony is held in the bride's house. This is the Hindu custom, but it is also that of many Uraon, the Baiga and (most significantly) the Hill Maria. There is some reason to suppose that the Gond practice is not really primitive but, like so many other customs, grew out of some actual incident that was interpreted as revealing the will of the gods.[1]

But even where the ceremony is modified, there is an attempt at a compromise with normal Gond custom. The groom's booth is made *outside* the bride's house, and he has a separate camp. Bride and groom are anointed with haldi in their own separate houses. The climax of the ceremony is at the groom's booth, and the concluding rites in his house.

But where the marriage is held in the groom's house, the booth is made *inside*, and both bride and groom are anointed together.

I must therefore inflict on the reader two accounts: the first is of the marriage of Dhuti and Nohori which I attended at Sidhawand in the north-east of the State from 3 March 1941, where the ceremony was held at the bride's house, supplementing it with observations of two marriages which I saw at Malakot in April of the same year. The latter was a double cross-cousin marriage; a Naitami girl and boy of Malakot married a Poyami boy and girl of Parsipadar by exchange. The second account describes the marriage of Karanga of Nayanar and Waddai of Amasara which began on 15 April 1941, and was held in the bridegroom's house. There were three marriages in succession at this time, and I also have notes of similar ceremonies in Telenga, Atargaon, Naria and Esalnar. In both accounts I emphasize, though I do not exaggerate, the part played by the chelik and motiari.

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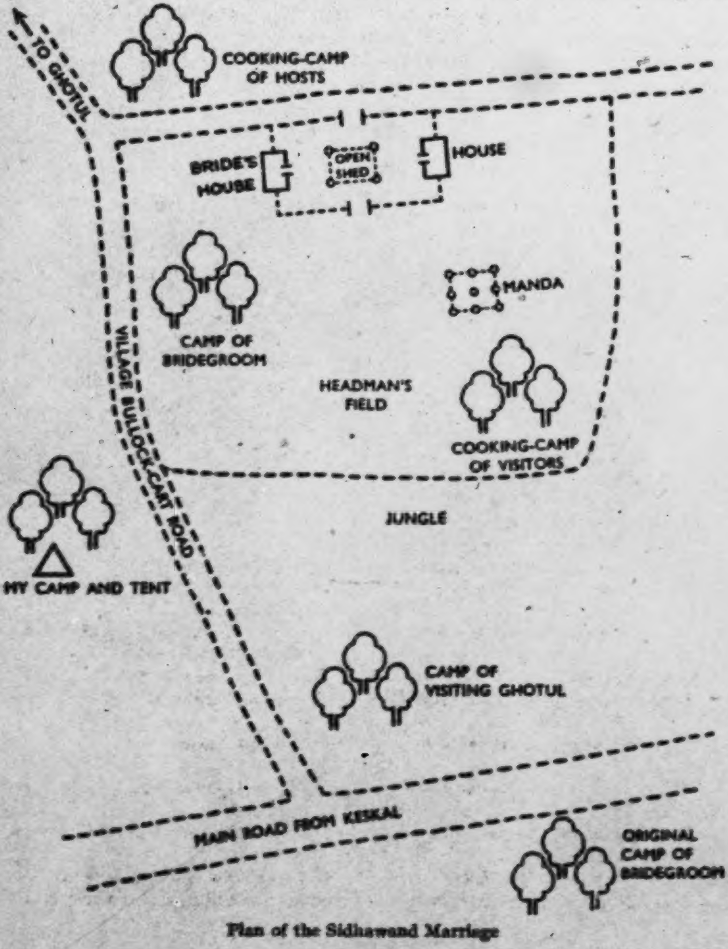
[1] Russell and Hiralal suggest that 'the custom of holding the wedding in the bridegroom's house is a *survival* of the custom of marriage by capture, when the bride was carried off from her own house to the bridegroom's, and any ceremony which was requisite was necessarily held at the house of the latter. But the Gonds say that since Dulha Deo, the bridegroom god and one of the commonest village deities, was carried off by a tiger on his way to his wedding, it was decided that in future the bride must go to the bridegroom to be married in order to obviate the recurrence of such a calamity'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73. Crooke refers to a version of the legend wherein the bridegroom was killed by lightning.—W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), Vol. I, p. 119.

The Sidhawand Marriage

In Sidhawand lives my *sakhi*, Pilsai; and his uncle the headman of the village (a Maravi) sent me a very warm invitation to be present at the marriage



Plan of the Sidhawand Marriage

585 of his daughter to a Poyami boy from Eitkonar. On 3 March 1941, therefore, I made my camp in the village, and was greeted with great affection.

Preparations for the Marriage

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533 For a whole week before the marriage, there had been energetic preparations both in the ghotul and the home. In the ghotul the chelik and motiari gathered round the bride and sang songs about her future joys and sorrows. So important is this training of the bride that even where the girls do not normally sleep in the ghotul, the rule is relaxed for these few days.

The songs describe the joys of ghotul life and the girl's stern and sorrowful experiences under a stepmother's rule. Here is a fairly lengthy song on this familiar theme. After each line the refrain *Rerela rerela rela rerela* is repeated several times. Each line ends with the exclamation *Roy helo, O sister!* and is itself repeated twice.

Song

Rerela rerela rela rerela

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Niya ra mandāna loni roy helo,	This used to be your home,
Loni gājur hindu roy helo,	How clamorous your talk here,
Loni re hinja podār roy helo.	But now the house is silent.
Niya re nāru gali roy helo,	Yours was the village path,
Koliyāl tokār harri helo,	The path was like a fox's tail,
Bera re arrān gāti roy helo,	You used to go at sunset,
Dāwāng haide heti roy helo,	In your left hand a winnowing-fan,
Tināng haide hesur roy helo,	In your right hand a broom,
Ghotu de heya hardi roy helo,	You went to clean the ghotul,
Jaliyāl mal lehka roy helo.	Like a peacock strutting.
Amha na miyār indur roy helo.	We said, 'There goes so-and-so's daughter'.
Ghotu de gājur hindu roy helo,	In the ghotul was a lot of noise,
Kile re koru racha roy helo,	The court was long and broad,
Niya ra jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Jodire ondoy kiti roy helo,	But you are leaving him lonely,
Sangi re jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Sangi re tasi dāki roy helo,	You are going away leaving him behind,
Dinda re rāj te mandi roy helo,	You were living in the kingdom of the unmarried,
Adere rājo pulo roy helo,	You will never enter it again,
Bulo re habār punwin roy helo,	You don't know what toil there is ahead,
Sagāre sidun punwin roy helo,	You don't know what relatives can be like,
Haton ne wāton ne punwin roy helo,	You don't know what visitors will come,
Kosure hoylune punwin roy helo,	You don't know what officials will come,
Ideke sudi wāyar roy helo,	But soon you will know it all,
Ideke bara pundaki roy helo.	Soon you will discover what married life is like.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

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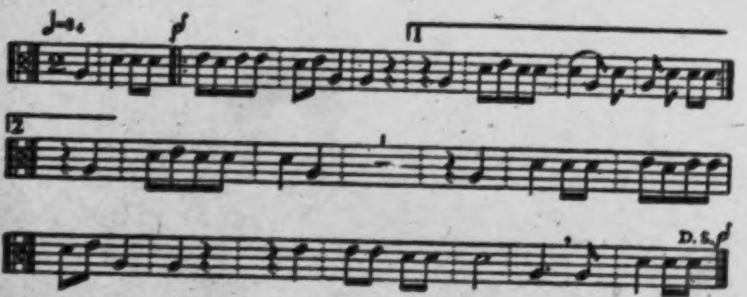
Niya jorta layor helo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotel jori layor helo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore layor humjdi helo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narka dhuinga talkindi helo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hile indur helo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga āyo helo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hewon injor witindi helo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Lāyon tasi dāki helo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dinderājo jorājo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ide rājo puto nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya wāyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Parmāhoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ide ghotul de wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dāma haide giki nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haide barga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

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[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,.	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke newta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangārām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke newta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare newta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

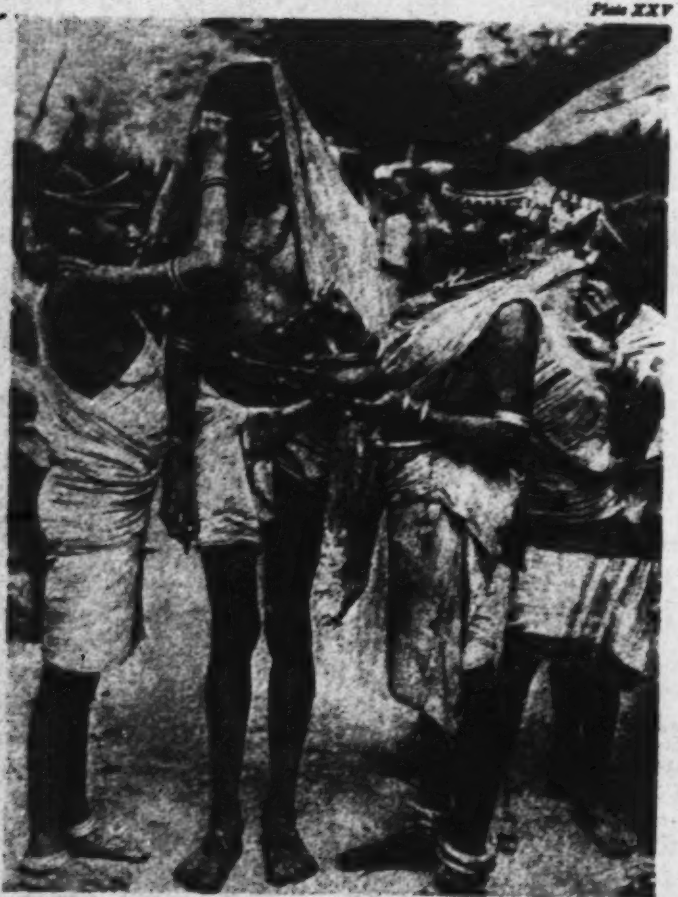
585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

Plate XXV



Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar

Plate XXVI

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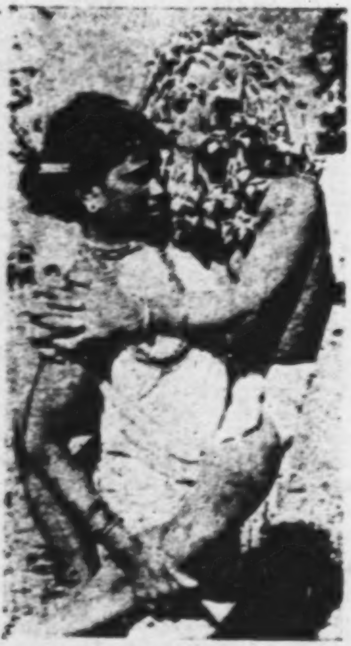

Motiari carrying the crowned bride groom at Sidhawand

Bridegroom sitting in the lap of an attendant

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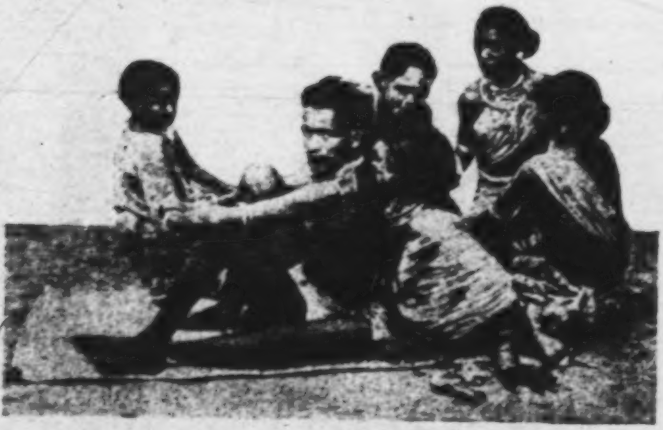

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Bride's Song

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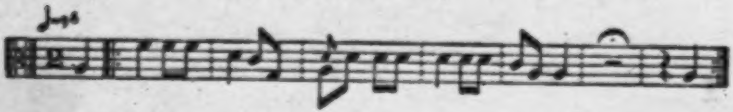

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The bride wept:

Father, my own father, come to me,
For I am going away to a stranger's house.
Had I been a boy you would have brought a daughter
To your own house.
But as I am a girl you send me away.
Had I been a boy, my wife and I would have stayed with you and made you happy.
But I must go away, and we both are sad.

Mother, my own mother, come to me.
Yesterday I was husking rice in your house;
I was sweeping the floor, fetching water from the well,
Cooking food for you, plucking leaves for cups and plates.
But now I go away to a stranger's house, and who will care for you?
How lovingly you looked after me!
But in this new house shall I find joy or sorrow?
When you come to see me shall I be able to give you so much as a cup of gruel?
From today my games, my fun, my seeing you will end.

Now the bride addressed the head of the ghotul.

O Sirdar, when you came to the ghotul and found it dirty
With ashes and dust and no one had swept it,
You called for me and asked me whose fault it was.
The Kotwar and Kandki defended me,
But you said, We are not Maria that we should sleep in dirt,
And so you fined us.
Now I am going away and whom will you have to fine?
Daily I cleaned the ghotul,
But now who will clean it?
With you I used to play and dance,
But now my feet are bound, and I shall not meet you even in my dreams.
Who knows whether I shall find joy or sorrow in this stranger's house.
Sometimes I combed your hair and laughing rubbed your arms,
But sometimes I was tired and slept.
Then you all said, Why don't you comb our hair,
And massage our limbs today?
You must have been to someone, why don't you come to us today?
For this you punished us, turning us out, and saying,
Never come more to the ghotul.
But I brought you liquor and with folded hands
Begged you to let us in again.
Now even in my dreams I may not massage you,
And who will there be to comfort you?

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Then she addressed every girl in turn, repeating the same formula to their different ghotul titles.

O Dulosa, Tiloka, Alosa, Jhankai!
I used to bid you sweep and clean, go here and there,
Comb this boy's hair, rub that boy's limbs.
Sometimes you forgot your duty and I abused you.
I went with you for the Diwali and the Hulki dance.
With you I played all kinds of games.
Now who will go to dance or play with you?
Who will teach you our ghotul ways?
While I was with you I taught you everything,
But now I go to a strange house,
And I cannot teach you even in my dreams.

Then the chelik replied,

Only yesterday you came to our ghotul to press our hands and arms,
But now who will comfort us?
Only yesterday you made us happy with your talk and laughter,
But now who will comfort us?
We used to trouble you in every way,
Yet you always gave us comfort.
If you didn't come to the ghotul for two days, we used to ask in the village where you were.
Sometimes they said you had gone away or had fallen ill.
Then when you came at last and we asked you what you had been doing,
You replied 'I went to such and such a village' or 'I was ill and so I couldn't come'.
But when we knew that you had not gone anywhere,
When we heard that you were not ill, but had been to sleep in some rascal's house,
When we knew that you had deserted us for that worthless fellow,
We had to punish you.
But now you will never be punished again,
For you are going away to a husband's house.
Never in your life will you be punished again like that.

Only yesterday we told you to fill our leaf-pipes, to fetch us leaves, to sweep the ghotul rooms,
But now you will never do that again.
We shall look at you from far away and whisper, There goes Belosabai.
No more can you go with us or sit with us.

But live happily there as you lived with us.
Love your husband and comfort him as you loved and comforted us.
Roll his leaf-pipe for him, fetch him leaves and water,
Clean his house, comb his hair, massage his arms and back.
But leave your games and loves and laughter.
Your games and loves and laughter now are for your husband.

And the motiari sang weeping:

Give food and water to your husband's parents.
Don't quarrel with them, don't annoy them, hark to what they say
So you will be happy; if not, your life is ruined.
Live happily with your husband's younger brothers and sisters.

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Pick leaves for them, fetch water, bring them wood, and clean their house.
Yesterday you laughed and played with us; tomorrow laugh and play with them.
Yesterday you went with us for water to the well; tomorrow go with them.
If a stranger comes to your new house, content him with water for his feet and a cup of gruel.
When we come, show that you remember us, and give us what we need.
You used to teach us everything, how to make necklaces with beads,
How to massage and how to please the chelik;
But who will teach us now?
When you troubled us, you were our defence;
But who will defend us now?
We will never forget you, without you our ghotul is empty and deserted.

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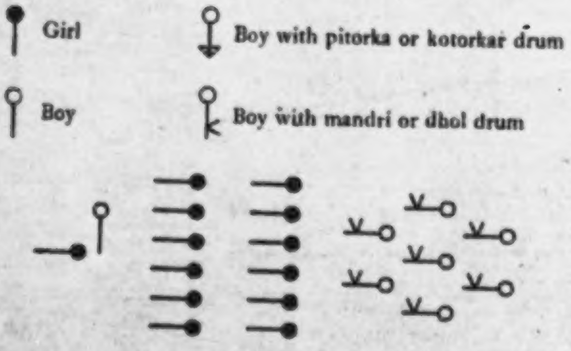
In this wonderful exchange of tenderness and remembrance the whole of ghotul life becomes real and vivid. Almost every line might have a footnote referring to some chapter of this book.

After a long night of this, everyone was a little subdued, and nothing happened next day till about 3 p.m. when the bride's party of chelik and motiari went out with their drums to meet the bridegroom.

The Welcome of the Bridegroom

The boys led the way with their drums, followed by a double line of girls, clashing their cymbals, singing loudly. They advanced three paces, halted, retired two paces, and then advanced again. At the same time the bridegroom's party advanced from their camp in similar formation, bringing the boy with them. As they went along, the girls sang a Gondi song with the refrain *Riri loyo ririla riri loyo ririla rila.*


Girl
Boy with pitorka or kotorkar drum
Boy
Boy with mandri or dhol drum

Sindi āki mowuri buba,	There's a crown of palm leaves, father,
Nana mowur korka buba,	I will wear that crown, father,
Bubān lār ne korka.	Wear it to please my father.
Sātu jār dādālor buba,	I have seven brothers, father,
Dādān lār ne korka buba.	For love of them I'll wear it, father.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

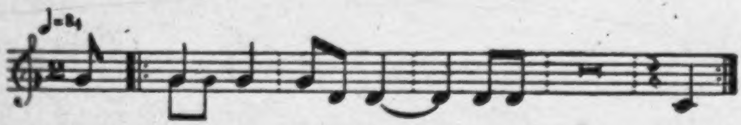
The Meeting of the Parents

585 Just inside the village the parties met—the girls greeted each other, and the elders sat down on the ground for *pārin-bhet* or *samdhi-bhet*, an important little rite which emphasizes that marriage is more than a union of two individuals; it is an alliance of families. A cloth was spread on the ground, and the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom—the two samdhi—sat down together to talk for a few minutes. The Gaita drew lines of rice-flour and turmeric on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Let tomorrow's work be rooted deep and the tree grow large!' When they got up someone threw a pot of haldi-water over them and there was a lot of ribald laughter.

In Esalnar, the samdhi sat down with a pot of water and cleaned their teeth, exchanging the twigs and saying, 'Let there be no quarrels, let all be well, let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'.

During this little ceremony the motiari sing various songs, of which the following (in Chhattisgarhi) is an example:

[533]



[539]

Milo milo milo samdhi kukur pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a puppy!
Kukur pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a puppy? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi hāthi pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a baby elephant!
Hāthi pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a baby elephant? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi burhāl pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a tiger cub!
Burhāl pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a tiger cub? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi gini pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a sucking pig!
Gini pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a sucking pig? Take away your baby.

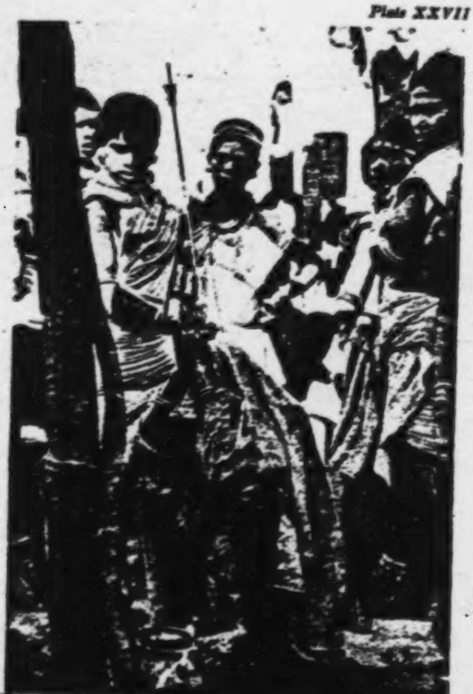
The bride's motiari went forward; one of them picked up the boy on her back, and they led him in this formation to his camp on one side of the headman's field.

Here was a small leaf-hut under a shady tree. Men and women of both parties greeted the bridegroom. They washed his feet and put a rice-mark on his forehead. Then they led him into the hut and made him sit on a new mat.

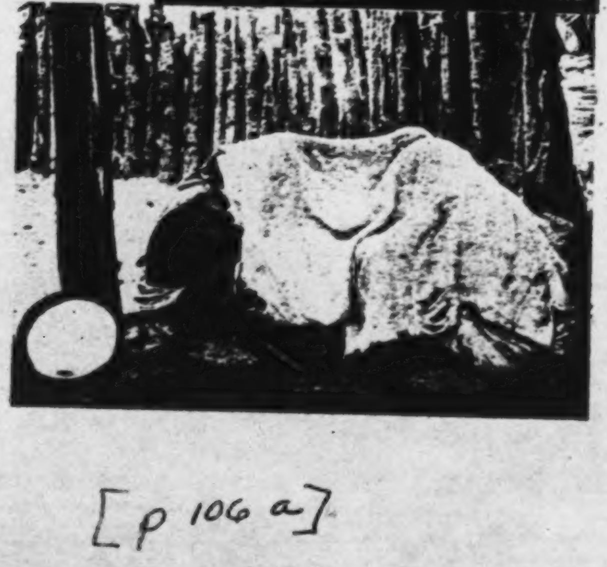
The Giving of the Ring

The scene now shifts to the bride's house. Presents of cloth were given to the bride's mother. As it had not been done at the engagement-time, the ring-cowrie, in its modern form of four annas, was given to the bride's father and put in the Pot of the Departed to compensate the ancestors for

Plate XXVII



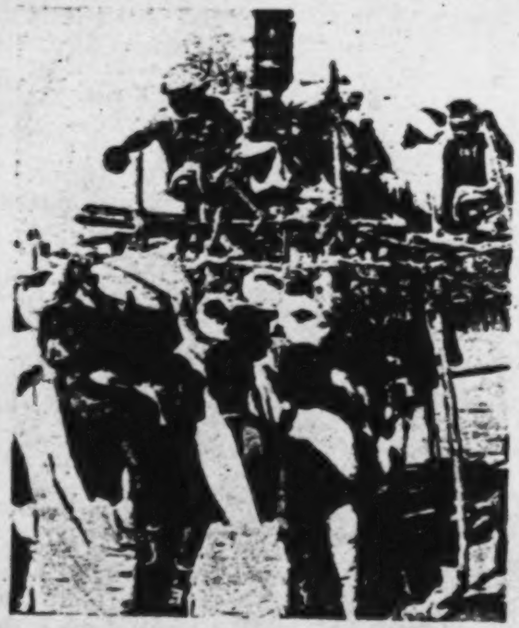
Pouring oil down an arrow on to the head of the bride



Preparing the bride's seat underneath a curtain

Plate XXVIII

The Horn Dance at Sidhawand



The Lagir ceremony at Sidhawand

[p. 106 b]

585 the loss of the girl from/their clan. This is a very important and significant ceremony. It represents the passage of the girl from her original clan into that of her husband, and indicates that she will henceforth be numbered with his ancestors.

The bridegroom was carried over from his camp. A new mat was spread, and the samdhi sat down. A little rice was put on their knees. The bride sat in the lap of her father-in-law, the bridegroom in the lap of his. Motiari covered the girl's hand with oil. The Gaita put a ring on the boy's little finger. The boy then seized his bride and tried to transfer the ring to her. But her hand was oily and slippery, and there was a long struggle—which caused great amusement—before he was victorious. Then the girl hit him with her clenched fist and jumped up. He tried to hit her back, but a group of her chelik dashed forward and covered her escape.

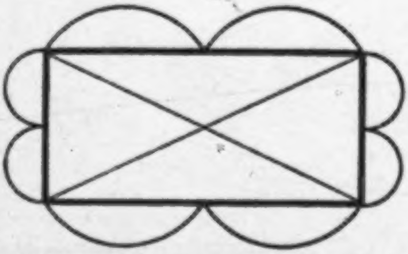
All the time the motiari stood by singing loudly:

[539]

Muda muda intoni dāda!	He is saying ring, ring, brother!
Sonār pekoh āyerom dāda,	Were I a goldsmith's daughter, brother,
Son muda hewerom dāda,	He would give me a golden ring, brother,
Dinda layorātch roy dāda,	Were he an unmarried boy, brother,
Kuddum dāka wāteni dāda.	He would come running to me, brother.
Kaide muda niya ro dāda.	The ring is in your hand, brother.
Pila hāra āteke roy dāda,	Were he a man with children, brother,
Pila odch kemy roy dāda.	He would bring them to stay with me, brother.

The Crowning of the Bridegroom

The bridegroom was now carried back to his camp, where the Gaita made a *ghari*-pattern[1] on the ground like this. The boy sat in the lap of his elder brother's wife. Old women, mother's and father's sisters, covered his head with the ends of their saris. The Gaita came with an elaborate crown made by Pannara from date-palm leaves. The leaves in the crowns are carefully counted: if the number in each is uneven, all will be well, but if the bride's number is even it means that the marriage will be a failure. This is the Neyi Maur or Oil Crown which will be worn throughout the preliminaries of the marriage, and then exchanged for the Lagir Maur at its crisis. The Gaita and the boy handed it to and fro seven times. The Gaita held it up, exhibited it left and right and with a sudden movement pushed it over the boy's face, while the whole party shouted in



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[1] These patterns, which are also made in the marriage booth, are akin to the 'threshold designs' common throughout India. Their purpose is, I think, definitely 'witch-baffling' Cf. *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 268 and XLIX, p. 181.

triumph. He dropped a little oil over the boy's head and shoulders, and applied haldi to his body with mango leaves. He was followed by everyone present.

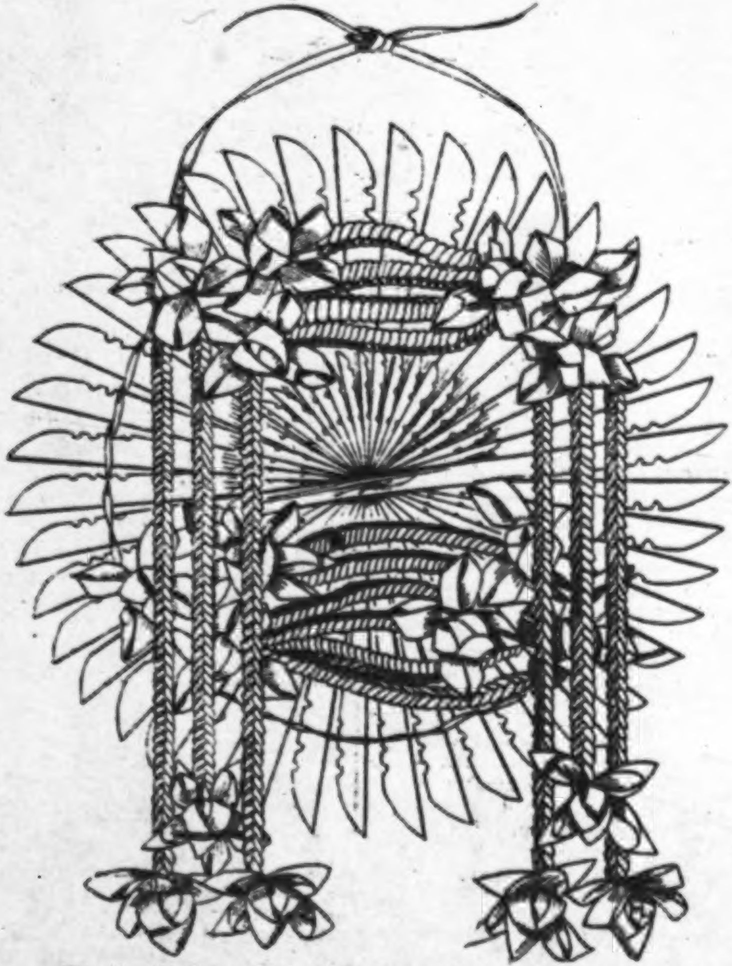
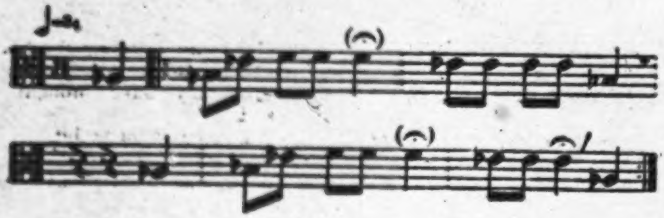


FIG. 18. Marriage crown for the bridegroom made of date-palm leaves
Breadth 1'

Meanwhile, the motiari sang songs about the date-palm, from whose leaves the crowns are made.



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Chhind pāna ke maur dai,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main maur bāndho dai ?	May I wear the crown, mother ?
Kāy mola dobe bābu ?	What will you give me, son ?
Gathri ke rupiya dai,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Kotha ke baila dai,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother,
Wahi baila dobe bābu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari. 585 539

Bāri kata chhind bata rati rati kande	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na bābu re chhind baia bābu maur pinde,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bāndo ke bāndo pujāri chatuk maur bāndo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Mandu Wood

Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of sarai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Puds* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The motiari came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously. 585

While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kerad bāyāng barka sulling porbatuh chato nor layor*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'. 585 533 831

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[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *bur, bur* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undraped reference to the *vis genetrix naturae* so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. II, p. 71.

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Layor talle manda ri sango;	The boys are bringing the boughs on their heads;
Maksi manda tator ri sango.	Secretly they have brought the wood,
Buching poynāh kāhtor ri sango.	They have cut it bit by bit.
Māke marsi hewer ri sango,	If they would give us axes,
Chhak ne manda kaderāt sango.	We'd cut the wood with a single blow,
Mamāt manda tawerāt sango.	And we would bring the wood in.

In the next song, the boys sing the first three lines and the girls answer.

Mando deri kokoti wākoti soy bai.	The pole of the booth is crooked, girl.
Tumcho vati chepoti roy soy bai.	Your vagina is like a chapati, girl.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy bai.	We will dance jumping up and down, girl.
Tumcho asan vatu roy soy dāda.	If we were to do it instead of you, brother.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy dāda.	We would dance jumping up and down, brother.
Gāra phāndun netu roy soy dāda.	We would yoke the cart and take it away, brother,
Kukra bāsti netu roy soy dāda.	At cock-crow we would take it away, brother.
Kānde tangia dhartu roy soy dāda.	We'd put axes on your shoulders, brother.
Bāchun deri mārtun roy soy dāda.	We'd bring a straight pole, brother.
Kokta bākta deri roy soy dāda.	We'd never cut a crooked pole, brother.

585
[831]

There are other songs which I need not quote, in which there is much play about crooked wood and the crooked penis, and the penis which can dig well in intercourse but cannot dig a hole for the pillar of the booth.

The boys had hidden a pice somewhere in the wood, and the girls spent a long time looking for it. Finally, about 7-30 p.m., the Gaita put some rice on the spot where the motiari had danced with the mahua tree, and dug a hole with his iron digging-stick. If white-ants or stones are found there, they move to another spot, offering an egg and chicken to whatever god the Siraha decides was responsible for the ill omen. But all was well today. The Gaita broke a coconut on his digging-stick, and the chelik planted the centre-pole of the booth and the mahua tree in the hole that the Gaita had made. After drinking a little liquor, the chelik then proceeded to make the booth (*manda*).

This was a very simple affair. Nine sarai poles were placed in a rough square, in the middle of which was the centre-pole and the mahua tree.[1] On the centre-pole a small representation of the vagina is often carved. A roof was made by tying poles round the square and criss-cross over it. This was again covered with leafy branches. Round the poles was tied a haldi-coloured string, or sometimes simply a rope of paddy-chaff, and a string of mango leaves. This string is called *toran* (Halbi) and is mentioned in another *manda* song. This has the refrain *Riri loyo ririlo ririlo riri loyo ririlo*, and is addressed apparently to the village mother. 585

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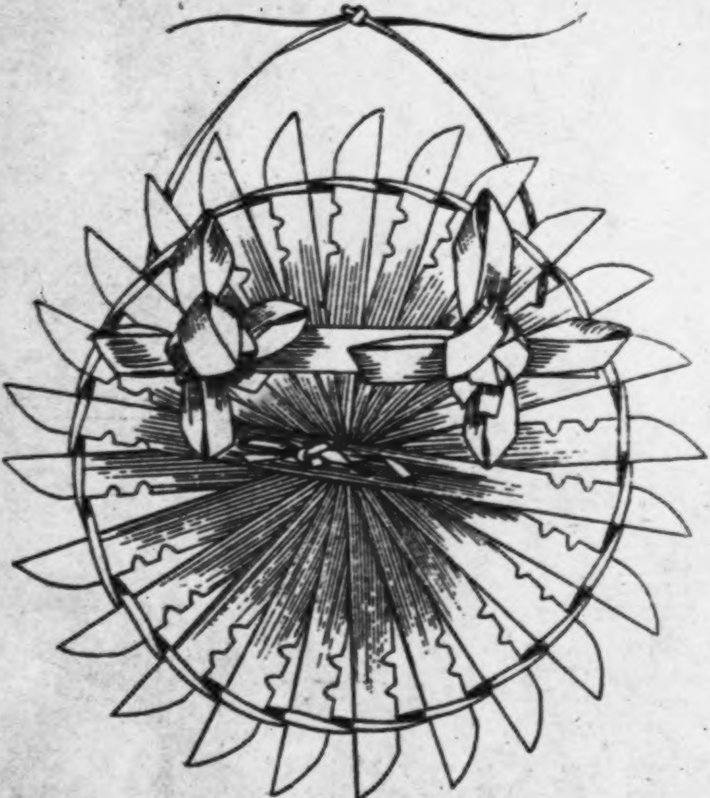
[1] A number of tribes put the mahua in the marriage-booth. The Omanaito do (Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 444), so do the Birjhia (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 332), the Senkar of Chhattisgarh (ibid., Vol. III, p. 316), and the Buniya or Bhinya (Dalton, op. cit., p. 148). Mock marriages to the tree are performed by the Bagdi, the Kurmi, the Mahili and no doubt others (*Census of India, 1911. Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 322ff). The Gond of Mandla put a mango tree in the centre of the booth, but elsewhere use a post made of mahua wood (Ward, op. cit., p. 138).



[292]

Fig. 19. Marriage crown for bride
Breadth 6"

Bāla kuwār pekāna dai,	O Mother of this young boy, 585
Subben dukhen boha wo dai.	Reveal his happiness and sorrow.
Gacher mucher āyma roy dai?	Why do you stay silent, Mother? 539
Kānjla toale āyo wo dai?	Because nothing has been promised you?
Haryar mania yukāmo dai.	Take our offerings willingly.
Tārāl tamor lamor wo dai.	He has no brothers, Mother.

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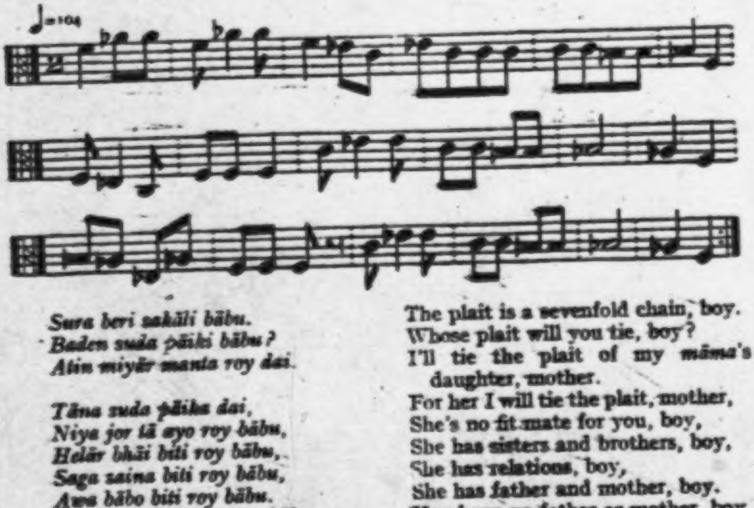
Awa bābo lewor wo dai.
Wenayise torun wo dai.
Mardi marra manda wo dai;
Layān parle bona wo dai.
Marka āki torun wo dai.
Bākiya nima behwi wo dai?
Bābuna jiwa werriyta wo dai.

He has no father or mother:
But here is a goat for the *torun*.
The pole is from the saja tree;
Young girls made the platform.
Of mango leaves is the *torun*.
Why do you not answer, Mother?
The boy's soul is frightened,
Mother.

Tying of the Beni-plaits

585 533 539 After this, the motiari carried the bride back to her house and her motiari and others anointed her with haldi. Then in both camps motiari busied themselves with tying the hair of their charges into two long and five little plaits. Other motiari stood round singing a song with the refrain,

Riri loyo. Ririlo rilo riri loyo ririlo riri loyo ririlo rilo rilo riri loyo ririlo.



Sura beri sakāli bābu.
Baden suda pāiki bābu?
Atin miyār manta roy dai.

Tāna suda pāika dai,
Niya jor tā ayo roy bābu,
Helār bhāi biti roy bābu,
Saga saina biti roy bābu,
Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
Awa bābona lewon roy bābu.
Tārāl tamor lewon roy bābu.

The plait is a sevenfold chain, boy.
Whose plait will you tie, boy?
I'll tie the plait of my *māma*'s
daughter, mother.
For her I will tie the plait, mother,
She's no fit mate for you, boy,
She has sisters and brothers, boy,
She has relations, boy,
She has father and mother, boy.
You have no father or mother, boy.
You have no brothers, boy.

This is a very common sentiment in the marriage songs. The bridegroom is an orphan, alone in the world, useless, ugly, unfit to mate with a bride so richly dowered with wealth and relatives. I add two other very short songs:

I

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Sur beni beni roy āya,
Main beni pāronde āya,
Pārole pāro tey pāro noma

O the links of the plait, mother,
I want to tie the plait, mother,
If you wish, boy, you may tie it.

2

Sāt bahin kanya buba!	O the seven Kanya sisters!	585
Kanya dhari basāla buba.	Holding your waist they sit.	
Sāt bhālti phuli nā buba	O the seven-times distilled liquor	539
Buba indāna buba na	Father, say, father.	

THE THIRD DAY

Bathing Bride and Bridegroom

Shortly after dawn the bride's motiari brought out the bridegroom and danced with him. Then they bathed him in front of his camp, making him sit on a wooden seat, while two chelik fanned him vigorously with large baskets. When this was finished he jumped from his seat into one of these baskets and the bride's motiari picked him up and carried him, swinging him vigorously, back to his camp. They left him with loud cries of *Sola* (penis). Then the bridegroom's motiari bathed the bride. 585

Songs

1

Riri loyo rilo rilo riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri riloyo ri ri lo

Māma bābu na yeru ra sangori;	The water's for our boy;	585
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra.	Like a stream of gold is the water.	539
Niya munin yeru ra;	The water's for your girl;	
Koda urkul yeru ra.	Like horse-stale is the water.	
Niya bābuna yeru ra;	The water's for your boy;	
Neyu urkul yeru ra.	Like a dog's urine is the water.	
Māma munina yeru ra;	The water's for our girl;	
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra sangori.	Like a stream of gold is the water.	

2

Dulhi na āng dhoila chelik sundar pāni,	Bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water,
Paniya paniya bolis re nona.	You were begging for a comb, a comb.
Abe paniya pāwalis re nona.	Now you have got your comb.
Sai shanwār sātum roy nona.	It's the Saturday bazaar today.
Sātum dasre kindi roy nona.	You were going to the bazaar.
Dulhi na āng dhoila chelik sundar pāni.	But you are bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water.

Digging the Manda Earth

I missed seeing this at Sidhawand, but witnessed it at Malakot. Some older women, carrying baskets covered with cloth, led a small procession of singing and dancing motiari and drummers to the house of the village cowherd (Kopa or Rawat). They danced for a time before the house, asking the Kopa's wife to come out.

Song

Kope le kope le pasia kope pasia roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, come outside.
Kope le kope le tuka teriy teriy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, have you some earth?

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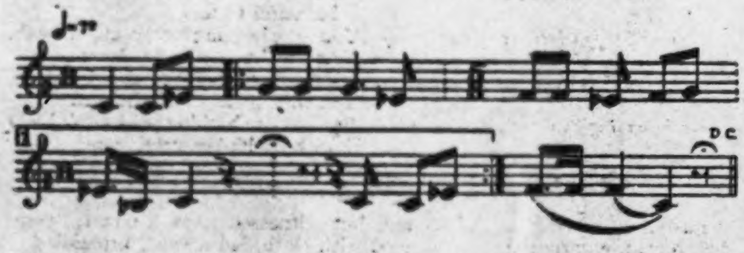
Kope le kope le uduh toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give us a little.
Kope le kope le sānde toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give the earth quickly.
Kope le kope le bāti jora kiti roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, what are you doing?
Kope le kope le tada kope tada roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, quickly get up.
Kope le kope le kopāl ondah kitor roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, is the cowherd enjoying you?
Kope le kope le girda mate mīyoy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, haven't you finished?
Kope le kope le girda tāye kuskar roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, are you still sleeping?

585 Presently the woman appeared carrying a digging-stick and was greeted with derisive shouts. She led them to the spot where the cattle rested at midday. There she sprinkled water and cow-dung and prepared a little patch of ground. The Gaita offered rice, egg-shell and haldi, and took the digging-stick in his hand. This was also held by the Kopa's wife and the bridegroom's mother. All three together dug up a little earth, put it into a basket and covered it with cloth. Suddenly one of the motiari picked up the basket and ran as hard as she could towards the *manda*. The chelik chased her; they had to catch her before she reached it. They were just in time; they took one of her rings, and then allowed her to put the earth by the mahua tree under the booth.

Plastering the Manda Platform

585
539 Then some old women, singing very fast, began to plaster with this special mud a little platform in the middle of the booth. They made patterns of rice-flour, plastered them in, and finally smoothed it all over.

533



Song

Bowis parila layor pamoiva konda buhing.	The boys don't know how to make the platform.
Nāgal chatong tallenjo.	The penis is like a ploughshare.
Māke bowis parri hemon ra.	The boys won't let us make the platform.
Sir karus layor parri vom.	If they did, how beautifully we'd make it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Some of the mud was left and the old women smeared it on any man they could find. I saw one of them creep up behind the Gaita and blindfold him with her muddy hands, shouting *Pude ākrango* or Vagina liquor! At that they all sat down and had a drink. Refreshed by this, the Gaita and an assistant drew an elaborate pattern on the freshly-plastered platform, and put earthen lamps at its four corners. The rice-flour and haldi for this was ground by the Gaita with his own hands. 585

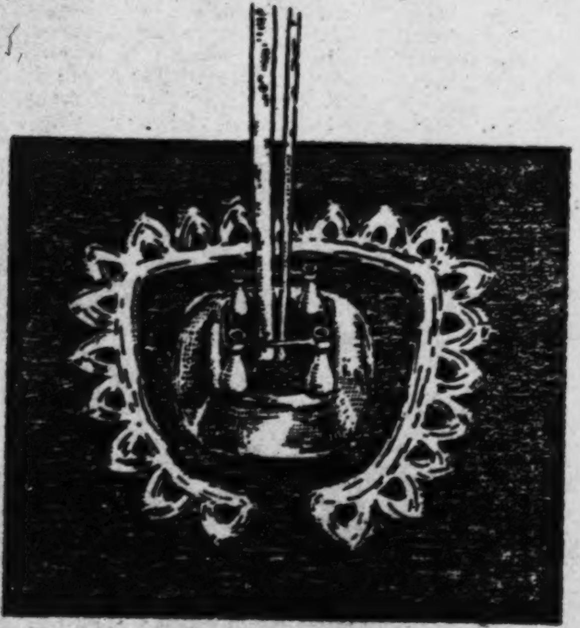


FIG. 20. K[illegible]ada platform with typical decoration, from Telenga

Songs

1

Alor alor singāri dosi,	Make varied patterns, Dosi, 585
Nahua singār karāye dosi.	The best patterns you know.
Kike mīna kānkeru dosi,	The fish has come from Kanker, 539
Kānker tike hāngita dosi.	The pattern faces Kanker.
Kotumj nemu kimu yo dosi,	Make the corners square,
Korri koji singāri dosi.	Make a cock's-foot pattern, Dosi.

2

Hardi pahkīva hardi pahkīva dosi.	Apply the haldi, Dosi.
Khāle haniya khāle haniyāla dosi.	Below for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Upar haniya upar haniyāla dosi.	Above for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Jan bisarke jan bisarke dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.

585
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Hāna duma la hāna duma la dosi.	Put it for the Departed, Dosi.
Māta māuli la māta māuli la dosi.	For Mata Maoli, Dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.
Tore dharam jo tore dharam jo dosi.	It is your duty, Dosi.

Further Anointing of the Bridegroom

585 Now his own motiari carried the bridegroom out again and brought him to the *manda*. They danced round the booth, one of them carrying him on her back, till they were tired. Then they made him sit on a motiari's lap on a bamboo fan to the west of the booth and outside it, and put a fan between his hands which he held folded before his face. Again they put haldi, making it 'climb' up his body. The bride's brother's wife came and wept loudly, saying, 'Never forget us and the love we've had for you. Come and see us often. Don't trouble our poor girl. She is ignorant and foolish, but you will be able to teach her. Let her come and see us often'.

This tedious and exasperating ritual continues during the whole ceremony. Every relative in turn must perform it over and over again.

Songs

585
539

1

Dāda indān he dāda!	Cry brother, brother!
Dharmu telu chaga wo dāda.	Anoint with holy oil, brother.
Tuhe dharam lāge de dāda.	This is your gift, brother.
Bai indān he bai!	Cry sister, sister!
Dharam telu chaga wo bai.	Anoint with holy oil, sister.
Tuhe dharam lāge de bai.	This is your gift, sister.

And so on, interminably, through the entire table of affinity.

2

Tiloke telo telo wo dai!	O the oil of til, mother!
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	Let me rub the oil, mother.
Tola re telu cherāten wo bata,	I would rub you with oil, son,
More re buta hamey jo beta.	But I have work to do, son.
Sagore din he buta wo dai,	You can work every day, mother,
Yehe re din he tele wo dai.	But this oil is just for today, mother.
Tore re buta rahe wo dai.	Leave your work, mother.
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	And rub me with oil, mother.

3

[831]

Kis howe howe layon eh he.	The chelik is a little monkey.
Kene porro targa howe eh he!	Climb up, O little monkey!
Gokāle dudo howe eh he!	Her breasts will fill your fists!
Kene dor raiya howe eh he!	Come down again, O little monkey!
Rāpāle pudo howe eh he.	Her vagina is big as a spade, O little monkey!

4

This song is from Bayanar village, a Paskana Pata for the anointing. The refrain imitates the noise of a goat in heat.

Sai le le bo bo bo! Sai le le bo bo bo! 585 539

O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip. 585 787

Filling the Kalsa

The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Relo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Sale!* (penis). 585 831

Songs

I

Nandi kata dotela barha bhālu lotela.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.	585 539
Kāhe jālle lotela dulhi le lotela.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.	831

585
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831

Kai pila koli bhālu pila kole.	Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.
Kāke buba balede dulha ke buba balede.	Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.
Kāke āya balede dulhi ke āya balede.	Whom will he call mother? The bride.
Kai rāg men gāge de hur hur balede.	To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*
Ama pān chiro chāro.	The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*
Dulha cholli kira paro ach.	There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis
Mande pude kurri.	Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Goti roy dodon banjāra aya!	O the Banjara's bullock, mother!
Noni bona roy sudha dāki noni?	With whom will you go, girl?
Māma na marri manior go āya.	There is my *māma's* son, mother.
Noni miya jori pobe roy noni.	He's not fit to be your mate, girl.
Ona roy sudha hanma roy noni.	Do not go with him, girl.
Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo.	He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.
Ona re suda hanon roya āya.	I will not go with him, mother.
Aich mande pude handi bandhla.	Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.
Dudhe handi bhursa.	And breasts like a brown pot.
Leka cho cholli bhursa!	O the penis of the brown boy!
Ama pān siro sāro.	The mango leaves sound *siro sāro.*
Leki cho pudi kira paro kurri.	The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

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[531]
Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

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Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo

Ursa wenjing karsa wo dai.	The pot is decorated with rice, mother.
Nana karsa kotihān dai.	I place a mark on the pot, mother.
Bāti wenjing kotikin bābu?	With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?
Hinga wenji kotikān dai.	I will use *hinga* rice, mother.
Bona suda kotikin bābu?	With whom will you decorate it, boy?
Atin miyār manda roy dai.	With my *māma's* daughter, mother.
Tāna suda kotikān dai.	I will decorate the pot for her, mother.
Tāna suda parwin roy bābu.	You won't be able to do it for her, boy.
Tāna jorti āywi roy bābu.	She is no fit mate for you, boy.
Tāral tamor biti roy bābu.	She has brothers, boy.
Halār bhai biti roy bābu.	She has sisters and brothers, boy.
Ama bābo biti roy bābu.	She has a mother and father, boy.
Nākam arik wāla wo dai.	But I am willing, mother.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

When the kalsa-pitcher is ready, decorated and filled with grain, it is taken out to the booth and placed by the central pillar.

Song

Hi demoni ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo

Ona ri bona ri karsa dai?	Whose is this pitcher, mother?
Jāti poyami pohāna jāti nani.	It's for a Poyami boy, daughter.
Ondiyise karsa nani.	This pitcher is for him, daughter.
Karsa malke māta dai!	How the pitcher glitters, mother!
Karsa hori dāka dai.	I am going to look at it, mother.
Niya bāreng sādu nani?	Why does it please you, daughter?
Yerri miyle tāndi nani.	It is a pot for bathing, daughter.
Tāndi gala oroy nani.	The pot is not broken, daughter.
Modi aokle kāri nani.	The cord has been cut with this arrow, daughter.
Kāri gala māyoye nani.	The arrow is not lost, daughter.
Loni kāre manar dai.	The Lamhada boy is in the house, mother.
Turre khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt wild animals, mother.
Moloi khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the hare, mother.
Māo khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the sambhar, mother.
Ake kāri māywār dai.	Then the arrow will be lost, mother.
Barsa pere māltona dai.	I am grown up now, mother.
Nākun arik wāta dai.	I am very happy, mother.
Hammu lona tāsom dai.	I cannot rest till I go away with him, mother.

In this song, mother and daughter look ahead beyond the marriage to the girl's first child. The kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot of warm water heated daily by the husband for the young mother's bath; the arrow down which the anointing oil is poured becomes the arrow by which the child's umbilical cord is cut. The young husband has gone on a ceremonial hunt—and by his success or failure they will know the number of their children.

From time to time a couple of girls came to clean the *manda*: as they did so, the others stood round singing. *Re re loyo re re la rela rela re re loyo re rela.*

Dulha kahan gelo belosa?	Where has the bridegroom gone, Belosa?
Wahin bahār galese belosa.	He has carried off his sister.
Kai dāra sanise belosa?	What branches has he spread?
Pharsa dāra sanise belosa.	He has made a bed of pharsa branches.
Kai pila hoke re belosa?	What child has she borne?
Bhālu pila hoke re belosa;	It is a bear cub;
Hur hur kare re belosa;	It cries *hur hur*;
Chābuk bale khade se re belosa.	It runs to bite you, Belosa.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 539 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, as they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Tāra wo dai nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nāwa iga to hile numi niya bubān nigādu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Tāra wo buba nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nāwa iga to hile numi niya dādān igādu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Tāra wo dāda nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Walāldāti koliyāl walālita?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chitkodāl wayāl hilu jo tāna toka tun kepur pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Walāldāti nirāl walālita?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chitkodāl wayāl tāna tālla tun kudwo panderār.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

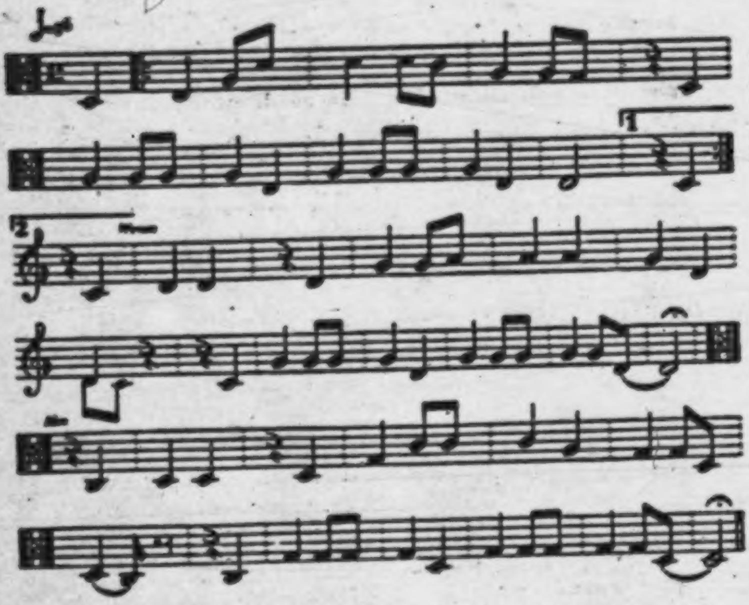
585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 831] The company drank, and made merry with fescennine songs, for 'there is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



585
533

Songs

1

Aliyāro maliyāro kanki paka joji!	The gruel is made of bits of rice, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro sānda joji hīmu!	Give us the gruel quickly, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh mīmār waha dākit?	Where are you going, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
Aliyāro maliyāro pārawān pite jori!	We are like a pair of pigeons, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro jori parki dāka!	We are off to search for wives, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh wātir bhumī dāka?	What country are you going to, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
Aliyāro maliyāro lānjir bhumī dāka!	We are going to Lanji Land, Aliyaro Maliyaro!

585
539

2

Cherota mara baba cherota mara darmi voy!	O the shade of the charota tree, father!
Wārāna darbār baba darbār nahi voy?	What is this durbar, O father?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kosa re kohkana nuni kosa re kohkana doyon roy!	O the silken horns of the bullock, daughter!
Tāne re mola nuni tāne re mola kindan roy!	I have named a price for this bullock, daughter!
Nākune nāreh buba nākune nāreh kema roy.	Do not deceive me, father.
Nākune mola buba nākune mola kindan roy.	You are selling me, father.
Kile re khapra buba kile re khapra rupia roy,	A rupee is worthless as a broken bit of earthenware,
Rupia re jiwa buba rupia re jiwa kiti roy.	Yet you love rupees, father.
Koda re urkul buba koda re urkul dārango roy,	Liquor is worthless as a horse's stale.
Dārango re jiwa buba dārango re jiwa kiti roy,	Yet you love liquor, father,
Miyāne jiwa buba miyāne jiwa hewi roy.	And you do not care for me.

3

Nikun lewāl nuni wātor roy guguti guguti.	They have come to take you away, my girl.
Wātir bhum tor dai wātor roy?	Where have they come from, mother?
Chhattisgarh tor nuni wātor roy.	They have come from Chhattisgarh, my girl.
Wātir wātir dai hamiāl roy?	What work do they do there, mother?
Jāti kawdo nuni hamiāl roy.	They are of the Kawdo clan, daughter.
One ise dai hemāt roy;	Don't give me to them, mother;
Kodo usi dai paron roy;	I cannot husk the kodon, mother;
Karwul māti dai danda roy;	My arms are like tundri roots, mother;
Danda gala dai nindo roy!	My arms are not yet grown, mother!
One ise dai hemāt roy.	Don't give me to them, mother.

4

Koh bodāl bodāl kopa le;	I have a horned bison, Kopa;
Nāwa bodāl mai: kopa le.	My bison is lost, Kopa.
Hāle māri māri gaita le,	On the hill of sal trees, Gaita,
Akey toru osi gaita le.	I had taken it to graze there, Gaita.
Sono tāye guta kopa le.	I had a golden tethering peg, Kopa.
Guta inja poitu kopa le.	Now the peg stands solitary, Kopa.
Hira tāye dāmir kopa le.	The tethering-cord was made of diamonds, Kopa.
Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.	Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.
Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.	Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

5

Bharewān bharewān kaida nana pairi karena;	I will wear the Bharewa's anklets;
Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum pairi karena.	The anklets tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.
Kochiyāna kochiyāna kaida nana churi karena;	I will wear the Kochiya's bangles;
Kaida re kaida re rumjum rumjum churi karena.	The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

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539

Setina setina haida nana getil huhena;	I will wear cloth from a merchant's shop;
Nani re nani re rumjum rumjum getil huhena.	When I wear that cloth, my waist goes *rumjum rumjum.*
Sondrān sondrān haida nana suta harena;	I will wear a goldsmith's neck-band;
Todara re todara re rumjum rumjum suta harena.	The neck-band sounds *rumjum rumjum.*
Sondrān sondrān haida nana dāru harena,	I will wear a goldsmith's ear-ring,
Kaiwa re kaiwa re rumjum rumjum dāru harena.	The ear-rings sound *rumjum rumjum.*
Kasarān kasarān haida nana chura harena,	I will wear the Kaser's bangles,
Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum chura harena.	The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum.*

6

[534]

Nāwa tehendor turit roy ange,	My *tehendor*[1] is lost,
Baga ise turit roy bābu?	Where was it lost?
Jamka jumur manda roy ange,	It was lost among the crowds beneath the booth,
Agĕy ise turit roy ange.	It is lost there.
Niya sang nor layor roy bābu,	Your friend the chelik
Niya layor bara oyor roy bābu,	Has taken everything,
Or ise oyor roy ange,	But he did not take that away,
Niya sang nāng layāh roy bābu!	O your friend the motiari
Ore bāra oyong roy bābu.	Must have taken it away.

7

Bera lopa bārang helo le nuni?	O what is in the field, girl?
Jhumjhum āyana nuni hanki tulawa.	The girl is cleaning pieces of rice, *jhumjhum.*
Bera lopa tarĕy helo le?	What is in the field, sister?
Tarai lopa wārang helo le.	The tank is in the field, sister.
Tarai lopa durpa helo le?	What is in the tank, sister?
Durpa morada wārang helo le.	The lotus-root is in the tank, sister.
Durpa morada kanjal helo le?	What is under the lotus-root, sister?
Kanjal rosela wĕyena helo le.	Under the lotus-root there is a mouse, sister.
Wĕyen ayo wĕyena dāda le?	Will you come to catch the mouse, sister?
Nāke dai rāngār dāda le.	I would love to come but I cannot, brother:
Niya dai matah helo le.	Mother would be angry with me, brother.
Jhāpit sandra hitona helo le.	I have given cloth from the basket, sister.
Hitah icho waiha dāda le.	If you have given it, brother, then I will come.

---

[1] Iron Jew's-harp.

8

585
539

Hare nāru ursima heso maryum parcha bili nāru heso maryum!	Don't build your house near the road, cousin!
Mardumshumāri nāru roy maryum!	There will be nothing but receipt-books and Census forms, cousin!
Kosur koytor wāynur heso maryum.	There the peons and their porters will come.
Khatiya lāwo indānur heso maryum.	They will say, 'Bring us a bed'.
Khatiya inda punwi heso.	We don't know what a bed is.
Katul inda puton heso.	All we know is a cot.
Chānwal lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us rice';
Chānwal inda punwi heso;.	We don't know what rice is;
Nukāng inda puton heso.	We only know paddy.
Dāl lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us lentils';
Dāl inda punwi heso.	We don't know what lentils are,
Dāring indā puton heso.	We only know pulse.
Namak lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us ground salt';
Namak inda punwi heso.	We don't know what ground salt is,
Hawor inda puton heso.	We only know rock salt.
Haldi lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us turmeric';
Haldi inda punwi heso,	We don't know what turmeric is,
Kamha inda puton heso.	We only know haldi.
Ghee lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us ghee';
Ghee inda punwi heso.	We don't know what ghee is,
Neyi inda puton heso.	We only know oil.
Pyāj lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us onions';
Pyāj inda punwi heso,	We don't know what onions are,
Gondri inda puton heso.	We only know garlic.

585 In this song, the words for the different things supposed to be demanded by the visiting officials are given both in the village and the more sophisticated dialects. A *khatiya* is demanded: the villagers only know of a *katul*. The visitor asks, in his own language, for *chanwal*, rice: but the villagers use the Gondi word *nukāng*; and so on.

The Arrow Ceremony

Now came the final anointing with haldi, the 'bringing down' of the oil from head to foot in contrast to the previous 'climbing', when it was applied from foot to head. The bridegroom was brought to the west of the booth and sat on the lap of one of his motiari. He held his hands above his head and an arrow was placed in them. The Gaita first, and then all his relatives, poured oil down it and it spread thence over his body. The same ceremony was performed for the girl, but inside the house.

Songs

585
1
539

Kudār kolāng dākāng māwor.	Our boy's stride is long as the handle of a hoe.
Neha dākāng wātma māwor.	Don't stride along too quickly, boy.
Kari gābo mendul;	Our boy's body is a plantain fruit;
Mendul gala nindoye.	His body is not yet ripe.
Ali āki moha;	His face is a pipal leaf;
Moha gala nindoye.	His face is not yet ripe.

585 *Berel āki chhāti;*	His chest is a banyan leaf;
Chhāti gala nindoye.	His chest too is not yet ripe.
539 *Kāreka kāya tala;*	His head is a kadam fruit;
Tala gala nindoye.	His head is not yet ripe.
Kārwul māti danda;	His hand too is a tundri root;
Danda gala nindoye.	His hand is not yet ripe.
Neha jhuleh kema	O boy, don't shake your hand too much
Danda dole māyār.	Or it will be broken, boy.

2

Huh dusār dusār buba huh dusār roy buba

Neyura dusār reha bupa.	The haldi oil has been rubbed down, father.
Kānde kāwar bojha buba.	A heavy load for a small *kāwar*, father.
Reh teke bojha buba,	Its weight is the same though you bring it down,
Teh teke bojha buba.	Its weight is the same though you raise it up.
Nāwa bojha reha buba.	Bring down the weight, father.

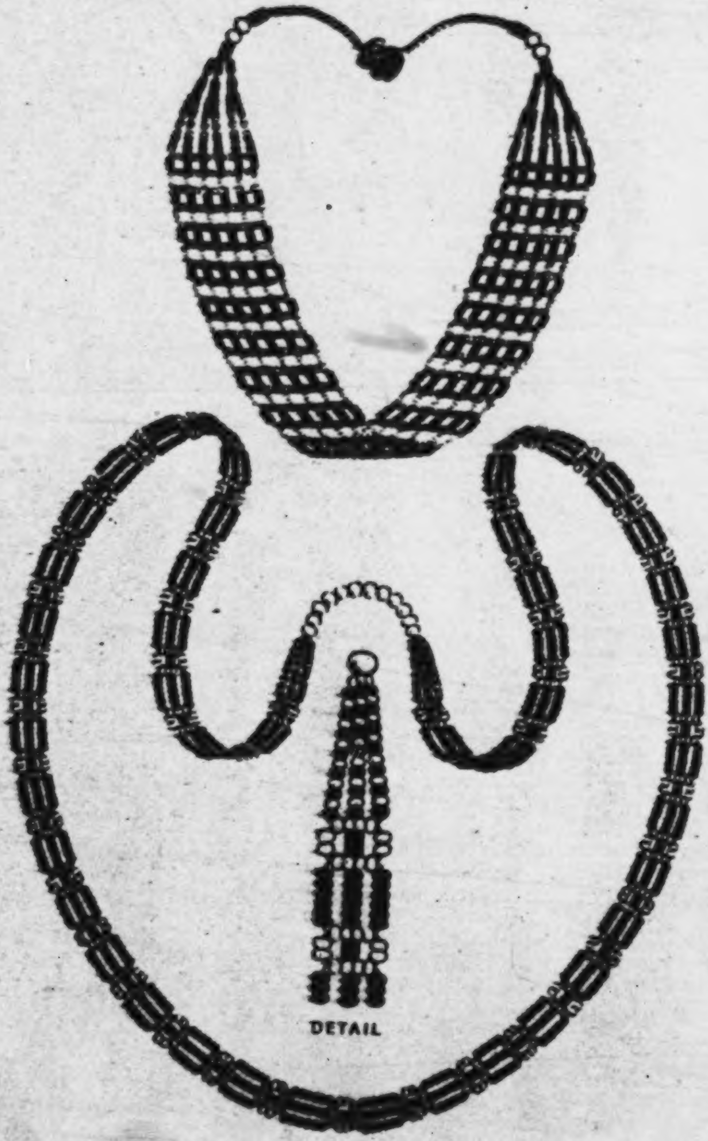
585 Then while a circle of motiari stood singing, others bathed the boy and re-tied his hair in three or four plaits. They decorated him, painting his eyes with black and white powder, and making stars of yellow haldi on his face with a splayed castor-twig. They put a new crown, the Lagir Maur, over his head and face. So attired he went round greeting everyone. A pot of haldi-water was hung from the roof of the booth.

The Lagir

Now the drums began to sound; the chelik moved out in formation from the bridegroom's camp and began to move round the booth. The whole place began to stir. Soon with grand display the bride's drummers came down the road. [292] They were led by two lines of boys waving antlers in the air; one boy was dressed in peacock's feathers, another had a gay cowrie jacket. They advanced, placed the horns on the ground, raised them with loud cries, retired, then came on again. They reached the booth and danced near by.

The bride's elder sister's husband came out of the house with the bride on his shoulders and a group of men held a canopy over them. A man similarly related brought out the bridegroom from his camp. As the two parties approached the booth, the drumming increased in volume, rows of girls singing and clashing their cymbals followed, a 'bison' appeared pursued by hunters, and a dummy giant whirled into the centre of the scene.

The two parties, the boy's party leading, now went round the booth, outside, seven times anti-clockwise. The drummers went ahead, the girls followed, clouds of dust rose in the air. When this was done, bride and bridegroom were made to stand at the west side of the booth, and their clothes were knotted together. The girl's elder brother and four other men climbed the booth, and poured a little liquor and then a whole potful of haldi-water over the pair. In Malakot, where brooms were tied to the tops of the nine poles, the men threw them down and shook the booth violently.



TYPICAL JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM MARKABERA

[facing p. 125]

585 This is the supreme moment of the marriage, the ceremony that finally asserts the union of bride and bridegroom,[1] the ultimately binding element in the long-protracted ceremonies. Bride and bridegroom were now man and wife.

Song

[539]

To manda batti dai;	There is the cattle's resting-place;
Aga padda manta dai.	There is a calf there, mother.
Padda dohi dāha dai.	I am going to tie that calf.
Sono ta dāmir dai,	There is a golden rope,
Padda poya hewo dai.	But the calf won't let me catch her.

Carrying off the Bride

Immediately the boy seized the bride, rushed her once round the booth, and carried her off to his camp, followed by a row of motiari singing enthusiastically. The bride's elder sister has the right to try to stop them: she stood in the way and was only appeased by the present of a cloth.

Ceremonial Greeting

[522] In a few minutes the motiari came to bring the newly-married pair back to the booth for tika, the ceremonial greeting by relatives and friends. They sat down on a mat to the west of the booth, each supported by motiari, and everyone in turn put a rice-mark on their foreheads and a small present in the dish before them. As people bent down to do this, old women poured haldi over their backs and often tried to undo their clothes and smear their naked buttocks. There was much ribald laughter and a lot of fun.

The motiari stood round singing as loudly as they could. Each relative was greeted in turn. Here is the song they used when the boy's father came for tika.

[539]

Wilor wālor-manda buba!	The booth is shaking, father!
Mandāī korku wār-tu buba.	The branches of the booth have withered, father.
Sānde tika tāsa buba.	Do the tika, father.
Wale bera kema buba.	Don't be late, father.
Pite harau harau buba.	The birds grow hungry, father.
Karon manda paron buba.	I can't bear to be hungry, father.
Niya marri lāruna buba.	This is your darling son, father.

---

[1] The essential and binding part of the marriage ceremony varies in different parts. In the Punjab it consists of the *phera* or circumambulation of the sacrificial fire. In the United Provinces the young couple walk round not a fire but the marriage shed or pole. In the east of these provinces and also in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the binding part of the ceremony is generally the *sindurdan* or painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion. Amongst certain castes such as the Hari, the bride and bridegroom smear each other with their blood, which they obtain by pricking their fingers with a thorn. In Bombay the higher castes follow the practice of circumambulation. The lower castes sprinkle rice over the bride and bridegroom, while some pour milk or water over the joined hands of the couple. In Orissa their right hands are tied together with *kusa* grass, or their left hands when the bride is a widow. In Madras there are various ceremonies, such as making them eat from the same dish, or knotting their garments together, or pouring water over them so that it runs from the man to the woman. But the most common is for the bridegroom to tie the *tali* or necklace round the bride's neck. The Brahmin bridegroom places the bride's foot seven times on a mill-stone, a symbol of constancy.—*Census of India, 1911, Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 322.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Marriage Sermon

At this point the Gaita and one or two elders sat down and delivered a sort of sermon. One man spoke, then another took up the tale, and a third continued. 'Now we have linked you two together. May you always have enough to eat and drink. May you live together happily. Bear many sons and daughters. Do not forget your parents. Greet the visitor at your house with food and water.' 585

The Farewell

When the tedious business of the tika was over, the bride and groom were taken back to the groom's camp and their crowns were removed. The boy was taken by his party out of the village to the road which ran near by. After a little while the girl, led by her father and escorted by two motiari (her own sisters) and preceded by drummers from her old ghotul, followed. When they came to the road, the girl bade a last farewell to her chelik and motiari. Accompanied by her two sisters, she went to each in turn and wept before them. She gave a pice to each of the chelik and they 'kissed' her farewell.

The two samdhi again sat down, drank a little and threw haldi-water over each other. 'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it!' Then suddenly two chelik picked up the bride and bridegroom and they went off very quickly, a line of motiari walking behind them.

Song

Kāka ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to uncle's house, mother,	[539]
Burkga mās khain wo dai.	There they eat beef.	
Dāda ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to brother's house, mother,	
Bokri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat goat.	
Didi ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to sister's house, mother,	
Kukri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat chicken.	
Hamla bāsi pej dein wo dai.	But we like to eat stale *pej*.	

The New Home

When the party came to the boundary of their own village, the Gaita drew a line of rice-flour across the path and placed seven sonra rings upon it. They stepped across this and went home without looking round. When bride and bridegroom reached their house, the boy's mother came out to greet them. She washed their feet and drank a little of the dirty water. She took her daughter-in-law into the house, and presently brought her out again into the court, where those of the villagers who had not been able to go for the wedding came to do tika and gave their presents. Then bride and groom were taken back into the house; offerings were made to the Departed and the ring-cowrie was put into the Pot of the Departed to symbolize the fact that the bride had now joined her husband's clan and after death would henceforth be numbered with the ancestors of her new home. Other offerings were made to the pots hanging from the roof and the grain-bins. 'These are all yours now', exclaimed the mother. 'Live here happily with us.'

The Wedding Crowns

At the end of a marriage the wedding crowns must be properly disposed of, for it would be highly dangerous to throw them away where a witch could get at them. It will be remembered that there are two crowns, the Neyi

585 Maur or Oil Crown, which is worn during the period when the bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and haldi, and the Lagir Maur, which is put on immediately before the critical moment of the marriage.

The customs vary from place to place. After the marriage the Oil Crown is generally thrown into a stream with some small offerings to the Yer Kanyang. The other crown is sometimes tied to the central pillar of the bridegroom's house. In Palari members of the Marrai clan bury the crown by this pillar and make offerings of liquor to the Departed above it, in order that the wife will always be faithful to her husband. In Kokori the Naitami and Marrai clans put the crowns in a hollow tamarind tree standing in the village. Other clans tie them to the pillars of their houses. Here they throw pulse and rice on the crowns in the name of the Departed. In the north of the State, at Penjori for example, when they are grinding haldi, preparing oil and husking rice in preparation for the marriage, the chelik and motiari go in procession to the ghotul and tie a little crown to the pillar in the name of Lingo. They then go to the Hanalkot and tie another crown there in the name of the Departed. In the Bara Dongar Pargana they sometimes tie the crown after the marriage in the shrine of the clan-god.

Even when a chelik or motiari has left one ghotul and joined another, his old ghotul may remember him at the time of his marriage by tying a crown to their pillar. This was done in 1940 at Penjori when the chelik put up a crown for a boy who had left them a year before to work as Lamhada for a girl in Kanker.

THE FOURTH DAY

I was not able to see the ceremonies of the fourth day at Sidhawand, but at Malakot I saw them twice; the procedure was, I believe, the same at Sidhawand.

293

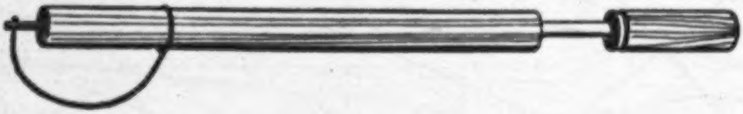


FIG. 21. Squirt, used in fun for spraying people with water at a marriage
Length 2' 7"

After the ceremonies of welcome to the new daughter-in-law were concluded, or on the following morning, bride and bridegroom were brought out of the house and made to stand together on an old mat.

Wherever I have seen this done, the couple affected the greatest distaste and stood averted from each other's presence. The attendant motiari first handed the boy a toilet-twig; he gave it to the girl and she threw it away. He gave her another one, and she threw that away also. Then she gave him one and he threw it away. He took a fourth and cleaned his teeth with it, and gave it to her. She cleaned her teeth and threw it down.

This rite may symbolize the intimacy of married life—I am not sure. The next appears to be a test of potency. The chelik gave the bridegroom a number of stout poles about six feet long. He handed them to his wife; she threw some away and returned others to him and he had to break them. The boys had already notched them half way down so this was not very difficult.

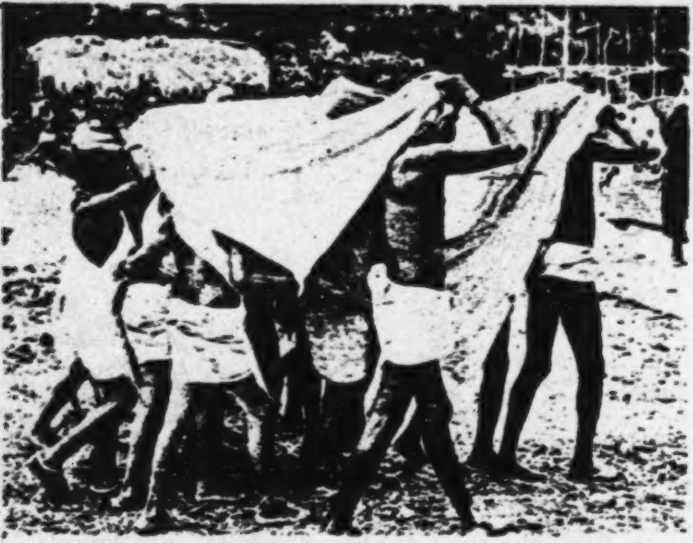
Suddenly without warning the boy seized his bride and spat in her mouth. When she had recovered, she handed him a gourd of water; he filled his mouth

Plate XXIX

ABOVE: The bride spits at her husband

BELOW: The husband proves his virility by breaking logs

Plate XXX



ABOVE: Bride being taken out for the Lagir procession

BELOW: The bride bids farewell to her old companions

[p. 128 b]

585 with the water, caught her and spat again in her mouth. Motiari gave him another gourd of water and he passed it on to his bride; she twice filled her mouth and spat all over him.

Now the motiari gathered round and undid the plaits of hair that had been tied during the wedding.

Song

585 *Sura beri sakāli sakāli he buba,*	There are seven links in my plait,
Nana sahal lehika lehika he buba.	I am going to undo the links.
539 *Bona lārne lehika lehika he buba?*	For whose love will you undo it?
Sātu jor dāda lor dāda lor he buba;	I have seven brothers;
Dādān lārne lehika lehika he buba.	For love of my brothers I will undo it.
Bārāng his lehika lehika he buba?	What will you give before you undo it?
Dobir bhainsi hiyāka hiyāka he buba,	I'll give a buffalo from my herd.
Tāne yise hema roy hema roy he buba,	Don't give a buffalo,
Dobir hinja poyor roy poyor roy he buba.	Or the herd will be desolate.

585 When the hair was undone, the motiari combed it, and then bride and groom threw water and rubbish over each other. They needed a bath and the motiari poured water over them.

Then two motiari sat down presenting little laps for ritual occupation. The boy sat down, and the bride came to sit in his lap. She stayed there a moment, then jumped up and hit him on the back. Then she sat down, and he prepared to sit in her lap. But at the right moment she wriggled aside and he tumbled to the ground amid roars of laughter. But he jumped up and hit her two or three times with his clenched fist.

The fun now became general. Chelik filled their mouths with water and blew it over the motiari. The girls filled leaf-cups with cow-dung and spilled it over the chelik. Meanwhile the Gaita's wife collected the haldi-stained clothes of bride and groom; someone brought out a pot and went round begging for fire. He pushed handfuls of rubbish against private parts saying, 'Set them on fire!' At last they put the pot on the fire and boiled the clothes. But they were soon brought out and tied in a bundle. The Gaita poured a little liquor on the four corners and they lifted up the bundle seven times. Bride and groom undid the wet clothes and threw them over each other. [831] Someone pretended to be a Ganda with a large imitation penis and went round trying to sell the clothes.

At last the Gaita caught hold of the married pair and dragged them into the house for a well-earned meal, which they took together in ceremonial state.

The Last Rites

The marriage is over but a curious and interesting rite remains. Bride and bridegroom go for one last visit to the ghotul. The bride first massages her husband and then every boy in turn. The chelik send the husband off to his house, and a little later tell the girl to follow him. When she refuses three or four of them take her by force, push her into the room with her husband and shut them in. I have seen this done at Malakot and Nayanar. I will describe the Malakot incident here.

585 In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie [354] down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

585 522 This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *honda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *get-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

585 In Aturgaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Munjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this

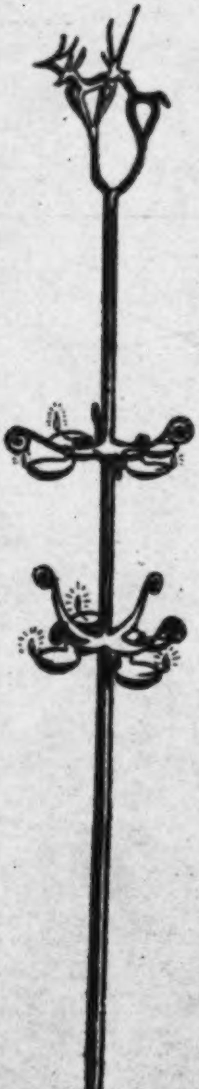


FIG. 21. Iron lampstand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

case was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for 585
taking a girl away from the ghotul.

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulha cho māndo dulha cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Paremān jhulese.	Swings the pigeon. 585
Dulhi cho māndo dulhi cho māndo,	In the bride's booth, 539
Tendha lotese lot buba lot.	The lizard copulates and copulates. 831
Pālak bhāji mane re leka bhāji hunlāy jai se leka.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jora jora tenda bans se re leka tenda pāni nāhin tire re leka.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Palārigaon cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongrigura cho hāri kom,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandik chathi abhich dehi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village 585
elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many
visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the 783
Village Mother.

V. The Nayanar Marriages: a Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that 585
a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ.

The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 15 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Relo. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with waistcoats and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Endanna when the bridegroom has to recognise his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, samdhi to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her to you'. At this the girl went weeping to her friends and gave them little keepsakes. As evening fell, the party left the village. Bride and bridegroom walked most of the way, but whenever they came to a field the chelik carried them across, and they threw pulse and rice onto the ground in honour of the Earth Mother. In Telanga, the bride had to cross a stream. She brought two aonra rings and threw them left and right as she went over in honour of the Water Maiden (Yer Kanyang) for she too was still a maiden.

The bride was brought to her new house rather late at night, but her mother-in-law received her, washing her feet and giving her a kindly welcome. In Telanga, the boy's motiari made the girl stand on a new mat covered with peacock's feathers for this greeting.

Bringing in the Manda Wood

At about 10 p.m. the chelik of Nayanar and visiting villages went to bring the boughs for the marriage-booth. After the Gaita had cut the mahua tree, food was given to the boys and they had supper there in the jungle. They returned to the village, dancing and drumming, shouting *Kiddar-pude* continually. A number of women waiting in the court of the house tried to stop them entering, but the manda branches were full of red ants, and the boys scattered these over the women and dispersed them. Then they danced banging the branches on the ground till the courtyard and road was alive with the ants; they chased any girl they saw, and rained a stinging shower over her.

The booth was hastily erected; there were only four poles and no brooms tied at the top. A rope of paddy straw was tied round and a string of mango leaves. The important thing to notice is that this booth was put up inside the courtyard of the house—I saw the same thing at Telanga—and this completely altered the whole ceremony: the grand procession of the Lagir became obviously impossible.

Now weary and bitten all over with red ants I went to bed. I am told that the party danced and drank all night; I can well believe it, they looked jaded enough next day.

Early the following morning, the Rawat's wife as usual dug up a little earth,
[131] but here there was no chasing of a motiari. An old woman put the earth in her sari and tied it over her buttocks, afterwards letting it fall in a very vulgar manner. As they returned the girls took grass from the thatch of a house and put it in their hair; later they stuck it in the centre pole of the booth.

The Worship of the Drums

This rite, which does not seem to be known in eastern Bastar, is very important in the central parganas. Before beginning to dance, the chelik put three mandri and a wooden gong together on the ground. The two leaders of the ghotul removed their turbans, made a small pattern of rice-flour and offered liquor to Tallur Muttai, Lingo and the Departed. Then four other boys caught hold of the drums and at a given signal picked them up all together with a loud cry, while other boys pulled the 'priests' over backwards. Only after this could the chelik dance. As visiting villages arrived the chelik marched up the road, with grand and triumphant drumming, and worshipped their drums in the same place.

The usual rites are now performed; the interminable application of haldi, the taking of omens, the tying of the plaits, the bathing of bride and groom.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

In some villages the Gaita takes the marriage pair to the shrine of the Village Mother to offer sacrifice and ask if all will be well. 585

Rites of Anointing

On the Lagir day, the groom was first taken round the pole inside the booth five times; this corresponds to the *kũari bãnwar* of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The girl was taken round later and carried swinging to and fro into the house.

In this type of marriage, bride and groom are again and again carried out of the house by their attendants to be anointed. After fifteen or twenty minutes they are taken back; then after a rest, brought out again. They are made to sit on a wooden *pidha* seat under the booth.

Songs

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The seat is made of sandalwood, O sister.
Come out girl and sit upon the seat.
It is in the raj of your mother and father.
It is in the raj of your brothers and relatives.
There is no kind of trick about it.

From Naria village, I have a few of the songs sung by the bride herself when her different relatives come to anoint her.

When her brother comes, she sings:

Give the oil lovingly;
Give the ghee costly as gold, brother;
Make the good oil climb my body.

When different *akomāma* relatives come, she sings:

Put a mark on my forehead, friends;
Put much haldi on my body.
You are the daughters of a great house,
I am your little sister.
How happy I was in my own home!
Now I go to a stranger's house.
Who can tell if I will live,
Who can tell if I will die there?

When her brother's wife comes, she sings:

I used to be in your house, bhauji,
Now you are giving me to a stranger.
You used to give me good food to eat,
But now you are sending me away.
When you come to visit me
Who knows if they will let me give you food or no?

At the end of the anointing ceremony, girls lifted the bride up and swung her vigorously to and fro as they carried her into the house.

Song

We will hold you fast,
We will not let you fall.
Swing, bride, swing.
We hold you safely in our hands

585 The Lagir was a very tame affair compared with what I saw at Sidhawand and Malakot. One of the boy's samdhi led the procession. He was followed by the boy, then by the girl, and then by five motiari singing. After completing the seven circuits, they tied the clothes of bride and groom together, and made them sit down for tika. When this was done a man poured water over them from the roof of the booth.[1] After this they were taken outside the house and the little rites of toilet-twig, undoing the plaits and breaking wood were performed as at Malakot.

The Tour of the Village

Now chelik and motiari escorted the bride and bridegroom round the village on a sort of farewell tour. The party first visited the ghotul, where the boy and girl threw rice and copper coins into the building. Thence they went to the Gaita's house and round the village. As the party entered each compound the house-folk came out to wash their feet, put tika on their foreheads and embraced them. The groom tied bead-necklaces round the necks of the young children of the house. The housewife gave rice and a coin or two, all of which was carefully collected in a basket by the leading motiari.

The Ghotul Camp

During a marriage the cooking has to be done out-of-doors. The ghotul is closed until all is over. At Nayanar a special camp was made in a magnificent grove of mango trees. Here the boys and girls lived and entertained their visitors. On the last night, the bride and bridegroom came at sunset, and the chelik and motiari of Nayanar sat round in a great circle. The bridegroom, who had been the Sirdar, attended by two motiari, gave necklaces and rings to every boy and girl. The rings were strung on two big *sutiatores*. The bead necklaces were tied together as they came from the bazaar. These gifts must have cost at least twenty rupees.

The Bedding of the Bridal Pair

Bride and bridegroom went to their house for supper; chelik and motiari had theirs in the camp and fed their many visitors. At about 11 p.m. girls and boys went to fetch the bride and her husband. They 'stole away secretly', as I was told, and stayed a little while in the camp. Then suddenly the chelik seized the girl and her husband and took them to their house. They went willingly enough at first, but when they reached the bridal chamber, though the girl entered without persuasion, the boy made a great deal of fuss. But at last they pushed him in, spread a new mat, and made them lie down together. The chelik ran out and shut the door, shouting with excitement. It was noticeable that no older person came near or showed the slightest interest.

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522 This time the chelik were able to catch a cock. They took it down to the camp and made a fire in a field near by and roasted it. In the meantime the younger children went to sleep. About midnight, the boys who had bedded the married pair, and eaten the cock, came round with handfuls of offal and burnt bones and feathers. They pushed these into the mouths and privates of the sleeping girls and boys, who woke spitting and protesting but

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[1] This is possibly the oldest part of the ceremony. Cain, writing in 1876, describes how a Koi woman was made to bend her head while the man leant over her and friends poured water out of a bottle-gourd. 'When the water ran off his head to that of the woman they were regarded as man and wife.'—J. Cain, 'The Bhadrachallam Taluka', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V (1876), p. 357.

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with a pleased recognition that the marriage at which they had so earnestly assisted had been consummated.[1] 522

VI. The Ghotul's Share in the Ceremony

Nāg nāgin ke bihao ma dondiya ke salmal. The little fish are kept busy at the cobras' wedding.—Muria saying

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No wonder that there is no greater threat to a Muria boy or girl than that the ghotul members will not attend their marriage. For from beginning to end the smooth progress of the rite depends on the chelik and motiari. For a week beforehand the motiari instruct the bride in the ghotul. Chelik and motiari accompany the bridegroom when he goes to fetch his bride; they sing and dance at every point of the ceremony; the chelik go to bring in the wood for the booth and the girls direct them to its site by dancing on the spot with a mahua tree. Boys and girls go together to fetch the earth for the manda-platform, and dance round it when it is ready. The motiari attend through all the long-drawn business of anointing, they carry the bridal pair about on their backs; they bathe them, do their hair, feed them and weep with them. At the central moment of the rite, it is the drumming of the chelik and singing of the motiari that provides dignity, colour and excitement. Chelik and motiari again assist at the concluding ceremonies in the bridegroom's house, and it is the chelik who ultimately arrange the consummation of the marriage.

But these ritual duties are only the beginning of their task. They have to see to the entertainment of a large number of guests. The Sirdar arranges for wood and organizes the dances; the Belosa sees to the supply of water and leaves. She and her motiari have to make leaf-cups and plates for the male visitors (they only give leaves to women visitors, considering that they should be able to make their own). This in itself is a very considerable task, but in addition nearly all the cooking is done in the ghotul camp, and chelik and motiari have to serve food at meals. I have never seen girls work so hard as at Nayanar, where there were three weddings one after another: as the chelik were leading one husband and his bride to bed, the motiari were preparing the next bride for her fate. The girls never seemed to stop working; they were engaged day and night; yet though they began to look very tired

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[1] Similar customs are observed by other tribes. In Siraiti, I watched Bison-horn Maria girls escort the bride to bed, though here the groom had to drag her into his house. Then a jovial party stole a cock and scattered its feathers along the path. The Juang boys escort the bridegroom from the *darbar* (dormitory), sometimes tying him hand and foot, to where his bride is waiting. They make him sit with her and say, 'See, here is your house: look to it. Here is a new girl, big-breasted and young. Do not disappoint her.' The boys piss inside the house, throw rubbish over the floor, then tie the door and run away. Bride and groom must clean the house before the marriage is consummated. I have witnessed a similar ceremony in a Bondo village.

For the Kota of the Nilgiri Hills, consummation was in the nature of a test, like the custom of 'bundling' in Wales. In the morning, the girl was questioned whether she liked her husband: if she did, the marriage was confirmed, if not, it was annulled.—E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), p. 62. Here, as with the Hill Maria and other very primitive tribes, the payment of bride-price and consummation was the marriage: there was little more to it.

By Hindus of Western Bengal, the third night after the wedding is called Phulsajya, or the flower bed. 'Eavesdropping goes on freely.'—S. N. Roy, 'Stree-Achar in West Bengal', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, p. 190. In Mysore, the Brahmins observe the beautiful *garbhadana* ceremony, when the husband in a room filled with flowers pours fruit into his wife's lap and the priest prays 'May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver'.—M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 134f.

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583 towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chithul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

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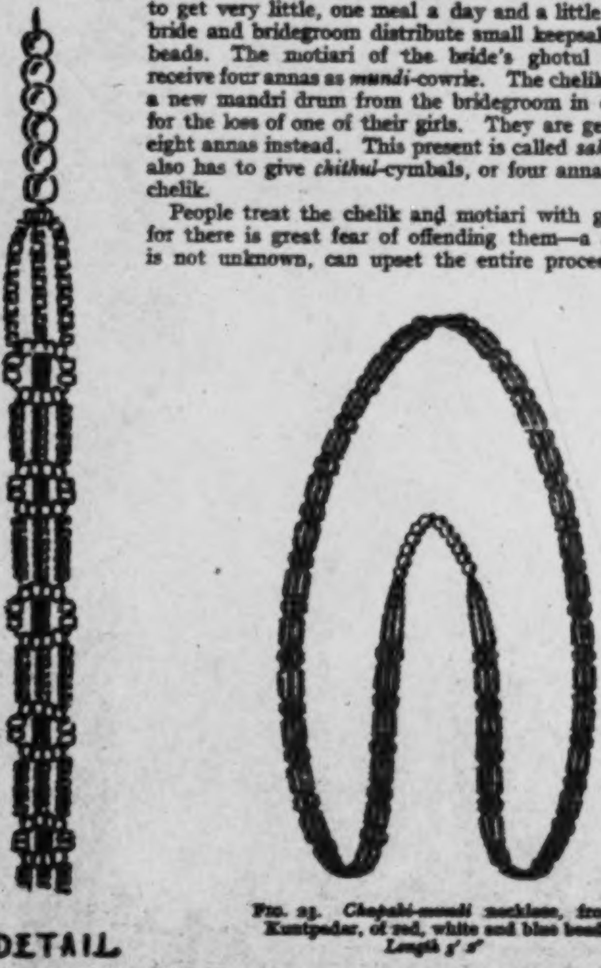

FIG. 23. *Chapali-mundi* necklace, from Kumtpadar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 5′ 8″

[831] noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

or to abuse her as he may do freely to the married women. There is no doubt 585
about it: these girls and boys are set apart. They must not be touched by 883
sophisticated adult hands.

VII. The Significance of the Marriage Ceremony

Where both boy and girl belong to the same village and come from the 585
same ghotul, the procedure is simplified and shortened, but otherwise follows
the same lines as in the foregoing accounts. It will be seen that, in spite of 182
various differences, the essentials of the rite are everywhere the same. The fundamental things seem to me to be these—the preparation and instruction of the bride in the ghotul, the ceremonial fetching of the bride by the bridegroom and his party, the building of a marriage-booth with its associated magical materials and patterns, the exchange of gifts and payment of a bride-price, the liberal use of oil and haldi to consecrate the bride and bridegroom, the procession round a marriage pole or booth seven times (the last two items are obvious borrowings from Hinduism), the tying together of the bridal pair, the pouring water over them (probably a development of a Maria custom), minor rituals designed to emphasize the unity of the couple and to ensure the potency of the bridegroom, the last visit to the ghotul and the official bedding of the couple by the chelik.

Let us consider the meaning of these essentials in more detail. In a brilliant analysis of the marriage ritual of the Bihari Kayasth, W. G. Archer takes a comparison from modern art. 'If we are to find an analogy for this wedding ritual, the nearest would be a surrealist poem, ballet or novel. In a surrealist work the action has a strange power and a mysterious charm. Strange persons develop their intriguing contacts and the action has an air of irrational urgency. On analysis it is seen that many of the actions are symbolic and the poem, novel or the ballet generates its power from the semi-conscious associations which its dialogue, gestures, scenery and action evoke. In the ritual of a Kayasth wedding, there is a similar use of irrational action, a similar use of persons with a strangely inflated power, and a similar use of semi-conscious symbols. The meaning of the ritual may be submerged and, for many, may be scarcely comprehended but its basis is in a symbolic system and its total effect is overpowering.'[1]

This will apply also to a Muria wedding, though the meaning here is sometimes more obvious; the Kayasth is a highly developed community and naturally resorts more to symbolic concealment of its real interests and desires. The different elements in a Muria marriage can be easily distinguished. There are first the many rites that emphasize the break with the old life and the entry to the new. There are the symbolic actions and materials to express the sexual aspect of the marriage and to ensure its fertility. There are the symbolic or overt arrangements to protect bride and bridegroom at this critical moment of their fortunes. The social and business aspect of the union of the two families is always prominent.

The length, complexity and extravagance of the marriage ritual is necessary to impress on boys and girls who are so used to love and sex the importance of the step they are now taking. Marriage here does not, as in so many other cultures, mark an initiation into the mysteries of sex. It is not, usually, the binding together of two people who have fallen in love with each other. It represents instead the end of a life of sexual and domestic freedom and the companionship of young people. It marks the beginning of economic responsibility, a change of residence, a transformation of the whole way of life. The ritual is adapted to emphasize this. There is the long week of preparation in the ghotul and the vigil of song and weeping that ends it; there is the parental fuss; the obvious trouble and expense for everyone; the solemn regard for omens; the new clothes and ornaments. I have often been reminded of the preliminaries to an operation—the bathing and shaving of the body, the tests and examinations, the rendering of the person aseptic, the creation of a sense that the patient is a being already separate and apart who will never be quite the same again. So now chelik and motiari are prepared for an operation that will sever them for ever from the carefree joys of youth.

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[1] From *The Wedding of the Writers*, the manuscript of which I have been privileged to see before publication.

The importance of this operation is further emphasized by the treatment of bridegroom and bride as the Raja and Rani of their brief matrimonial court. They are crowned; the leaders of their community defer to them and treat them with respect; their 'army' and 'police' accompany them everywhere, even when they go to perform their natural functions; they must never walk but always be carried about; at the time of tika everyone salutes them; they are 'Raja and Rani for two days and a half'.

This is a time of peculiar supernatural danger and the measures taken to avoid it find their parallels in many parts of the world. The crowns are not only symbols of royalty but correspond to the wedding-veil. Bride and bridegroom are also covered with a cloth both at the crisis of the Lagir and other important moments of the ceremony. This, and the refusal of bride and groom to look at each other, is connected partly with sexual modesty, partly with the belief that it is dangerous even to see dangerous persons.[1] Bride and bridegroom remain silent for most of the ceremony; certainly they never speak to one another. 'This is a common taboo upon persons passing through a critical period, and the principle behind it is a natural impulse of egoistic sensibility, a sort of recognition of the importance of the occasion, combined with more or less of spiritual fear, either of general danger, or in this case, of danger from each other.'[2]

The ceremonial beating of the bride by the bridegroom and of the bridegroom by the bride, which occurs several times during the ceremony, is regarded by Westermarck as intended to drive away evil influences and may also be connected 'with the idea of gaining power'.[3] Protection from evil spirits is probably also the aim, or one of the aims, of the Jhoria Endanna when a group of motiari including the bride dress up as boys and the bridegroom has to try to recognize his future wife.

Among the demon-scarers employed during the ceremony may be mentioned the brooms tied to the booth, the oil so freely used, the tying of the hair in plaits, the carrying of bride and groom over the threshold and the ceremonial bath. Brooms are important as sweeping away ghosts and spirits; sticks or grass from a broom are often used in magic or divination. All over the world bride and bridegroom are carried during their wedding[4] and in particular are never allowed to touch with their feet the threshold which is generally haunted by spirits. The ceremonial bath is regarded by Crawley as intended 'to neutralize the mutual dangers of contact'.[5] The magical

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[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 44.

[2] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.

[3] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1925), Vol. II, p. 518.

[4] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 532ff.

[5] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 30.

585 182 importance of the Muria bath is emphasized by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose[2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831 The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the site of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

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[1] Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.

[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 515ff.

[3] *The Wedding of the Writers*. And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homoeopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 592.

[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 457.

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things are broken to ensure or facilitate the consummation of the marriage. The Berber blow a cane to pieces. The Zulu bride breaks a spear. Among the Yakut dry rods are broken and burnt.

Haldi, with its yellow colour, is both a ghost scarer and a sex-symbol. It is significant that one of its forty-six ancient synonyms is *kamala*, 'lustful' and others refer to it as 'night'.[1] The oil with which it is mixed is, to the Muria mind at least, another sex-symbol, recalling the oil used in massage and that traditionally put on a lover's mat 'to make it slippery'.

Other objects are concerned more with the fruit of intercourse, for the fertility so carefully avoided in the ghotul is now passionately desired. The kalsa-pitcher is an obvious symbol of the womb: it is filled with fertile grain and a lamp (which stands for the act of love in folk-poetry as in Pahari paintings) covers its mouth. The arrow is another obvious sex-symbol[2]; the very interesting song on p. 119 connects the marriage arrow with the arrow used to cut the umbilical cord of the first child: here too the kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot from which the mother is bathed during the ceremonial uncleanness of the puerperium. The decorations of the booth, the strings of mango leaves so green and fertile, the coconut, the grain, the burning lamps, all hint at love and love's fruit. Even the curious rite where the bride and groom throw away their toilet-twigs and spit at each other may aim at ensuring union and productiveness. Most obvious of all the symbols are those connected with earth, for woman is everywhere the earth whom man must plough and sow.

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The incidents and furniture of a Muria marriage, therefore, have not come together by chance. They are purposeful and charged with meaning. They express in vivid and dramatic form the working of the Muria mind. There could hardly be a more emphatic means of bringing home to a young couple their social, sexual and domestic union.

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[1] See *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 39.

[2] Westermarck gives many examples, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 490; so does Archer, *The Blue Grove*, pp. 172ff.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

I. OLD AGE AND THE CLIMACTERIC

888 THE place of the aged in Muria society is not unenviable. The training in the ghotul instils into the minds of boys and girls the idea of respect for older people and, for all its stress on equality, a sense of the dignity of position and achievement. This attitude remains with the children all their lives. An older man, therefore, often enjoys a very favoured position. In time he becomes a member of the village, and even of the pargana, panchayat. The system of cross-cousin marriage, so largely prevalent in the tribe, ensures that he is surrounded by a large number of relatives and dependants. Among these he gradually rises to a position in which flattering attention is paid to his judgement and it is considered essential that he should be consulted in everything to do with the welfare of the tribe, the clan, the family, and the ghotul.

887 Nor is there any loss of the variety and colour of life. He still occasionally visits the scene of his youthful happiness and, if he is wise and tactful, the children will consult him about their affairs. If he has the art of music or story-telling he will command absorbed attention. He still goes to the great tribal festivals and the commercial Marhai in the larger villages. At these, if he is a Siraha he will dance and beat his drum as lustily as any chelik; he will meet scores of old friends and drink with them. At marriages, which he invariably attends, he has a special licence to play practical jokes and [522] to indulge the coarsest behaviour. There are certain to be present many men and women who stand to him in the 'joking relationship', and a marriage is the stage whereon the Table of Relationship comes to dramatic life. Nobody is likely to think less of him for his pranks. Indeed the antics of the old men are an enlivening and picturesque feature of most marriages.

888 But, of course, the varied scenes he has witnessed and the bereavements he has suffered generally tend to make the old Muria at other times somewhat sad and meditative. Disease sometimes hampers his movements, though many old Muria are remarkably hale and hearty. A proverb runs: 'When a child he plays; when a boy he displays his beauty; in age his head shakes and he meditates.' This comparison of youth and age is a favourite one among the Muria. 'The baby has no hair; the youth dresses it; the old man's curls behind.'

887 The old village woman, Muria, Gond, Pardhan or Baiga, deserves the world's most profound respect. Her wrinkled face and bent indomitable form, which is so familiar a sight in every Muria village, is the symbol of the courage, devotion and the will to persevere characteristic of her race. Upon her falls the heavy burden of the work of an ever-growing household. She is expected to be present and to help at the confinements of every one of her descendants. She constantly has to care for her grandchildren and may even be called on to provide milk for them from her withered breasts. Should she be relieved of the burden of a family, her lot is no less arduous, and I have often seen the pitiful little huts in which some lonely, childless widow spends the evening of her days.

But the old woman's lot is not unbroken drudgery. The scheme and pattern of Muria life is well devised to break up the monotony of village existence with bright and vivid colours and gay bursts of song. The old woman too

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for
her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage.
Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth.
Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free
herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her
life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery,
[522 the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they
831] may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements
are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

> You are an old woman,
> Forget your dances.
> You are an old woman,
> Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
> And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies
there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that
883 something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul
is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahāl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *ange*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

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[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

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sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or 883
wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain
them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. 764
Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a 883
funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal;
the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups
for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young
baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose
of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatis- 761
fied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the love-
liest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is 775
not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed
through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not
consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property
to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women
or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or 765
motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and
the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to 775
trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives
under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done
in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she
becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia
and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari
is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young
children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years
ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul
building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it
against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay
here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual
offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away.
They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus
freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the
Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-
bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing
his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an
Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain.
In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the [755]
ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy.
When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices
and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and
possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the
village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village
during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small [585]
date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from
here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone
on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he
removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became 775
what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very
dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and
motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

115 eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

165 During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

115 153 Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

115 154 Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

115 A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

114 115 The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

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[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

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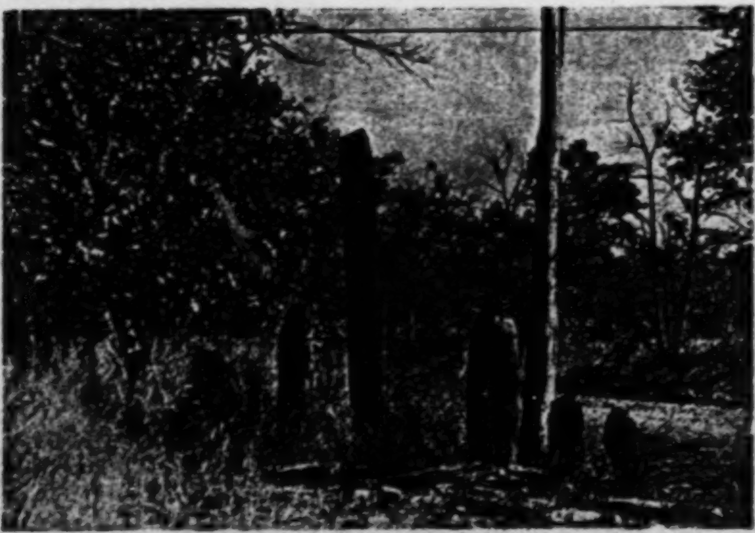
The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier

Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon



[p. 144 (a)]

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Plate XXXII

[p.144 (B)]

Plate XXXIII

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Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p.144(c)]

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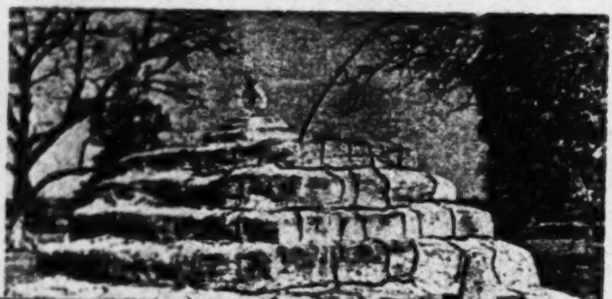
Plate XXXIV



Tomb at Gudripara

Small menhir in front of the Gudripara tomb

Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder

[p. 144 (D)]

> 774 [775] dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?'
>
> I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

775 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

772 775 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

772 means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub
slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose
775 brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In
at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

775 But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally
interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are parti-
769 cularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any
breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery
[837 is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is
153] brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings
must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

769 The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

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[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions,
to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are 769
thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a
single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way
disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence.
In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of 764
the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably
represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not 177
unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east
of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not
always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and
the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, 764
whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera,
the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and 766
west is "down"'.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those
who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari 764
I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual
scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

764 The Muria cremate the bodies of those who die of yaws, leprosy and dropsy, so a party of chelik went ahead to prepare the pyre. When the bearers reached the place, which was in thick jungle, on the far side of a stream, away from the usual crematorium, they carried the corpse round the pyre, which was below a great mahua tree, three times anti-clockwise, and then laid it on the ground to the south-west of the pyre with the feet to the west.

Each of the relatives present came forward and laid a small piece of cloth on the body. Dhako's father-in-law (a father-in-law or an elder brother is often the chief actor at a funeral) poured out some mahua spirit by the head of the corpse saying, 'Today accept this from our hands; after today how will you get it again?' They then removed most of the clothes, but tied one piece to a branch of the mahua tree. The rest they took home to distribute among the children.

The chelik lifted the corpse on to the pyre and the old Wadder woman placed a little earth on saja leaves at either side of the head. She took a stone and broke Dhako's bangles 'for now she is separated from her husband, she is a widow'. They put a little jawa-gruel and water by the head, leaving the pot there. The chelik piled wood and dry grass round the pyre, but none was actually laid on the body. They rested the bier against the pile of wood and one of the boys broke it with his axe, then struck the ground all round—to represent the driving of nails 'to close the house' and prevent the ghost walking, and then two of them threw the axe to and fro over the pyre three times.

Now the same chelik who had carried the bier lit bundles of grass from a coil of paddy-straw rope which had been brought slowly smouldering from the hearth of Genjru's house, and ran quickly two by two round the pyre in opposite directions kindling the dry grass. The flames shot up and the women broke into a loud and moving lamentation. The men threw twigs (of any tree) onto the burning corpse, muttering, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us. Let him take these twigs instead, for it's all he'll get'.

The people stayed for a while, some of them looking up fearfully at the smoke to see if it would go straight into the air or no, then returned slowly and sorrowfully to Genjru's house. The father-in-law met us and distributed oil which was rubbed on face, hands and legs instead of a bath. He gave tobacco and liquor to those who had brought pieces of cloth to cover the corpse, but not to others. The people then slowly and quietly dispersed.

When the corpse is buried, similar customs are observed. On 12 November 1941 I attended the funeral of Bhaira, a middle-aged man of the Halami clan, at Gorma. Here the bier was covered with plantain leaves[1] and the corpse bound firmly to it with cord. Here it was the dead man's daughter-in-law who, with hair untied, followed the bier. When they reached the grave, which was about five feet deep, the village Siraha put a little cow-dung at the bottom, placed plantain leaves above and on the leaves some sticks. After the corpse had been lowered into the cavity, it was covered with plantain leaves, and the Gaita let a few drops of liquor fall by its head saying, 'When you were alive, I could give you nothing, but at least take this now'. After the grave had been filled in, large stones were placed upon the mound. The men went to bathe, but the women remained. The widow brought a pot containing all that was left of the food that had been cooked for the dead man on the day of his death, and emptied it near the grave. She was persuaded by the other women to sit down above her husband's

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[1] Plantain leaves, which are sacred to the Hindus, are regarded as unlucky by the Muria because of their use in funerals.

head. Weeping bitterly, she cried, 'All these days you were with me. Now 764 you have left your wife and gone away. So take your bangles, I don't want them any more'. She broke the bangles and threw them on the grave.

In Amgaon the rite of the dead fish was omitted, probably because no fish were available. But in Gorma, when oil was given to the guests for their purification, they were also offered a small dead dry fish floating in oil. They had to touch this and make a mark on the Gaita's forehead with a drop of oil; he did the same for each of the guests.

Ceremonies vary considerably according to the age and status of the deceased. Thus when a young bride died at Temrugaon on 22 March 1941, it was the chelik who took a leading part in the ceremonies and some of them made a pathetic reference to her youth of happiness in the ghotul. Here it was three women, the girl's mother and two sisters, who poured liquor, not onto the ground, but into the corpse's mouth. Three chelik broke the bangles: each placed one hand on a stone and their leader smashed the bangles. Most of the other ornaments were removed and distributed as gifts to the motiari. But the wooden square, round which a Muria girl's hair is tied, was placed in the grave above her head along with the broken bangles and one necklace. After the earth had been filled in, the women poured a little oil and some gruel from a gourd onto the head of the grave.

The sense of outrage, the feeling that something has gone wrong, that the magicians have failed and the gods have 'let them down' is almost as marked as the deep and genuine grief of the mourners. We have already noticed how they said at Amgaon, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us'. At Gorma the family had promised a goat to Gondin Pen, a pig to Tallur Muttai, another pig to the Rau and a chicken and coconut to the Departed. At the funeral, just before the grave was filled in, the dead man's son stood by the head of the grave and broke a small stick into five pieces. He threw one piece into the grave and said, 'I promised Gondin Pen a goat if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. He threw the second piece and said, 'I promised Tallur Muttai a pig if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. And so on. At Temrugaon the husband and father of the dead girl stood at the head of the grave holding seven saja twigs. The others present said to the husband, 'If she were alive, what would you give?' He replied, 'A goat, a pig, a hen' and so on, and at each answer threw one of the twigs into the grave.

When an old and distinguished Muria dies the ceremonies are more elaborate. The body is carried out to burial with singing and dancing. An *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* (death-drum) to summon the relatives and then goes dancing and beating his drum before the bier, singing, 'O dead man, now you are sleeping with your feet turned up, and your penis is pointing to the sky'. It is one of the social duties of the chelik and motiari to attend such funerals and escort the bier. I have recorded one of the Gondi songs that are sung on such occasions.

Chole dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Oru boru rājāl ra?	Who is this Raja?
Māwa yisu rājāl ra.	It is our Raja.
Dori dipte dāntor ra.	The Raja passes through the Under World.
Dori dipte gajur ra.	There is a great noise in the Under World.

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Manjhpur te chimu ra.	In the Middle World is silence.
Porro diple chimu ra.	In the Upper World is silence.
Rājām yise os mail ra.	Let us take the Raja home.
Bāra dindona aria ra.	Twelve times have the folk been called.
Warāt dādi warāt ra.	Come, brothers, come.
Hajār muli gurh to ra.	A thousand men have gathered.
Adu bādu koda ra?	What horse is this?
Bagri māro koda ra.	It is the horse Bagri Maro.
Tānāng kālku itek ra?	What should we say of its legs?
At kālku na koda ra.	This horse has eight legs.
Tāna talla itek ra?	What should we say of its heads?
Nālung talla na koda ra.	This horse has four heads.
Sono tāye kharau ra.	It has golden shoes.
Kharau yise kertor ra.	It has to wear these shoes.
Hira tāye lagām ra.	It has a diamond bridle.
Lagām poysi uditor ra.	Catch the bridle and mount the horse.
Perke muney māney ra.	There are men before and behind.
Odāng odāng pulus ra.	There are police on either side.
Koda chhute māla ra.	The horse begins to run.
Adu bādu māhāl ra?	What is this palace?
Māhāl porro bairag ra.	Above the palace flies a flag.
Chāron kotunj te bairag ra.	On its four sides are flags.
Nao khand ta māhāl ra.	There are nine quarters of the palace.
Māhāl lopa jhulna ra;	Inside there is a swing;
Sono tāye jhulna ra.	The swing is made of gold.
Hira tāye gāddi ra.	The throne is made of diamonds.
Gāddi sope kewit ra.	Give him the throne.
Māhāl sope kewit ra.	Give him the palace.
Johār bhetu kewit ra.	Greet him with Johar.
Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come away, brothers, come away.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

In this very interesting song, the horse Bagri Maro is, of course, the bier and its four bearers. The men and police on every side are the escorting chelik. The palace is the grave and the tomb that is usually built above it for an important man. The flags are the bits of cloth tied to overhanging trees or attached to the tomb itself. The throne is made of sticks and leaves on which the corpse is laid.

I also have a lengthy and very coarse song sung by the mourners as they go down to the stream to bathe after disposing of the corpse. I will give the first fifteen lines.

Chole dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Dātu ra dādi dātu ra,	Let us now go hence,
Yeru miyāla dātu ra,	Let us go to bathe in the stream,
Ghātum teke reyit ra,	Let us go to the bathing-place,
Samund teke yer miyit ra.	Let us bathe in the ocean.
Adu bādu rāni ra?	What Rani is this?
Ade rājona rāni were ra.	This is the Rani of that Raja.

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer waiyāke kilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water. 764
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Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pitāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune hurandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tāna dudong āteke ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Māhka kāyāng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghātum tikeda wāndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lone tike handung ra	In the house
Mud gathe māla ra	There are so many relatives
Suju buju hile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise. [831]

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done. [522]

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1] 761 787

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbukri* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

761 787 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

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[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 430), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonla (IV, 341). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinised and it is said that usually the footprints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *akomáma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it. 769

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *akomáma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance 769
for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *gutri*[1] horns
tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, 535
a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In [292]

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[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

769-535 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lāhari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

Re re nāgo re rela !

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Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga baga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going?
Sono rupo bandāng ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamre mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise yewandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāt kori layah kere ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise handur ra,	They are going there,
Bandāng jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parahandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa koji hindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa puto ra.	But they cannot find it.

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[1] Such dramatic rituals give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often deified, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Dāda hārāl itur ra,	His brother says,
Wāy ra bābu wāyu ra.	Come, father, come.
Idām injor hatur ra	When he said this
Jiwa injor wāndu ra.	The soul came.
Dāda hārāl poyindu ra.	His brother caught it.
Dōtu dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go:

Re re nāgo re rela!

This song explains itself so clearly that no commentary is needed. It is sung by chelik and motiari while the elder people are groping about in the water trying to catch some kind of living creature. The next song also gives an exact description of the rites that accompany the return of the soul, after it has been caught, to its home.

Songs

Ange hāri mihandu ra	Daughter-in-law puts it (the soul)
Puhna tind te irandu.	In a new pot and shuts it up.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Ange hāri indu ra,	Daughter-in-law says,
Dāyu bābu dāyu ra!	Come, brother, come!
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score boys,
Sāt kori layāhke ra,	Seven score girls,
Dand laure māndur ra,	They go along,
Ange hāri poyse māndur ra	Daughter-in-law carries the pot on her head.

Lone yise yewtor ra,	They reach the house,
Ghāt ghadse māndur ra.	They come outside.
Lone yise yeekun ra	When they reach the house
Agāy yise rohandu ra.	She puts down the pot.
Nātenoru saga ra,	Wife-clansmen of the village,
Bāhar tore saga ra.	Wife-clansmen from outside have come.

Samdhi saga wāsmandur ra,	The wife-clansmen have come,
Helār bhai saga wāsmandur ra.	The brother-clansmen have come.
Ore yise talhikindu ra,	They are asking,
Jiwa muda tun talhikindu ra.	They ask for the ring of the soul.
Jiwa muda tun poyendur ra	The relatives
Saga sana poyendu ra.	All touch the ring.
Saga saina jiwa muda tun ra	The relatives tie the ring
Kasur padiya te dohandur ra;	On a broom;
Lopāra marmis pāt te ra,	Then take the broom inside,
Agāy yise dohandur ra.	And tie it to the cross-beam.
Rond rupaiya na dāvango ra:	They give two rupees for liquor:
Dāvango yisa tach māndur ra.	They give liquor to all.
Saga saina tun hindur ra:	They give to the wife-clans:
Bhai bandan tun hitor ra.	They give to the brother-clans.
Lotor yise mānoy ra	The people of the house
Johār khatu hindur ra.	Salute them with Johar,
Johār khatu hikhon ra	After the Johar greeting
Apun āpanlokhe handur ra.	The visitors go home.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

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The next song refers to the erection of the booth in honour of the Water Maiden whence the motiari carry the pot containing the soul up to the house.

Chole dada ro ro le	Come, brothers!
Gari poto hintor ra	The Gaita's son
Gaitana marri hintor ra,	Makes a seat,
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Rāni kaniyātun gari ra	In the Rani's name
Hintor nima girta āuu ra.	For you he makes a seat.
Nima rāni dāyu ra!	Come O Rani!
Nima penu atoni ra.	You have become our god.
Garh husiyār mata ra	The house is ready
Rāni kaniyāna āndu ra.	Of the Rani Kaniya.
Garh lopa bārāng ra?	What is there in the house?
Ghar lopa jhulna ra,	There is a swing in the house,
Sono tāye jhulna ra,	The swing is of gold,
Chāndi tāye sakri ra,	The chains are of silver,
Hira tāye gādi ra	The throne is of diamonds
Gādi poroy udita ra.	On which she sits.
Tāna poroy ileke ra	Above her
Jora chawar artu ra.	Are a pair of fly-whisks.
Dari dipte gajur ata ra;	In this world there is much noise;
Niya songnor girta ra	Come, for your friends
Ator nima acho dayu ra.	Are happy.
Manjhpurte chim arta ra	In the Middle World is silence;
Nima acho dayu ra.	Therefore come.
Silāwāri layāk ra	Silawari is a maiden,
Dātu bai dātu ra.	Come, girl, come,
Mawa jiwa oil ra;	Bring our *jiwa* home;
Harik manle dāyu bai	Come willingly
Lone nima wāndaki ra.	And live in our house.
Samdhi saga wator bai.	The wife-clan people have come, girl.
Helār bai walang ra,	The sisters have come,
Dand lāwre mator ra,	Come by the path,
Lone tike wontor ra.	Come home with the soul.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

Another song, recorded at Kokori, refers to the wild and lonely life of the soul in the jungle before it is brought home to live in the granary.

Bābu bole bābu na!	Brother, O brother!
Tuy bale bābu sunu!	Listen to us, brother!
Jau bābu jau na!	Go, brother, go!
Jau bābu jau!	Go, brother, go!
Kaha bale jawa bābu?	Where should I go, brother?
Kaha bale jau?	Where should I go?
Pāni ghāte jau bābu,	Go to the place of water, brother,
Bāra bali kholi.	Where there are twelve rooms.
Jhar bhitar rahis bābu;	You were living in a tree;
Ban bhitar rahis;	You were living in the forest;
Pāni ghāte jau bābu.	Go to the water-place, brother.
Pāni ghāte jau.	Go to the water-place.
Burjaun rahis bābu.	You were in the dust, brother.
Pāni nahauk karu.	Now go to bathe.

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Pāni nahauk jau bābu,	When you have bathed, brother,
Gadiya baisuk jau.	Go, sit in the granary.
Nāwa linga pidum bābu,	Wearing a new cloth, brother,
Gadiya me baisua.	Sit in the granary.
Chīti cho dhār howan bābu,	Like a line of ants, brother,
Ghare bale jau.	Let us go home.
Age din cho dāda bābu,	The elders of former days,
Uhay milak jau.	Go to mix with them.

This song, which is in Halbi, refers to the custom of east Kondagaon (and of other parts) of keeping the soul in the granary. The song ensures that the soul will come happily. It is said that the souls of the dead hear all things on earth the wrong way round. Mourning sounds to them like merry-making, and a song sounds like a wail.

VIII. The Bazaar Ceremony

In some villages in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria go to the nearest bazaar to buy parched rice, gram and liquor. They walk round the shops scattering the rice and gram and then visit the grave of the dead man. Here they eat and drink a little and then go home saying to the soul of the dead, 'Come home with us'. They go into the Room of the Departed and it is believed that the soul follows them. 769

The mourners go to a bazaar. The women carry rice, bread and sweets in their baskets and sit down near the market-place, but away from it. They pretend to have a bazaar of their own and the men of the party go to them and pretend to buy. The widow or the chief female mourner, if the deceased was a man, comes and sits in the middle of the party; the Gaita offers fire and incense and the rest give her leaves and flowers. In some villages it is supposed that it is at this time that the soul of the dead man mixes with his ancestors. Then the widow leads the party widdershins round the bazaar and comes home. On their arrival at the house the mourners say to her, 'Now let us depart. You have had great sorrow, for your life has left you. You have had great expense, but don't worry. Live happily and eat your fill. God has given you sorrow, but if you brood on this sorrow overmuch who will care for your children?'

In the Mardapal Pargana they performed the same ceremony by walking round the place where the cattle rest at midday. In other villages, specially those at some distance from a bazaar, the people hold a mock bazaar in their own compound putting out for sale old clothes, bits of wood, seeds and beans. Instead of money they use the broken pieces of an earthen pot. This does not seem to take the place of the ordinary ceremony of bringing the soul in a pot from the river but is supplementary to it. If for any reason these ceremonies are not performed, a cock is sacrificed annually at the year's end. A saja 'tooth-twig' is also given so that the dead man can clean his teeth before eating.

The ceremonies are confused and vary from village to village and even from time to time. But the main outlines are clear. The soul of the dead man is supposed to be living outside his home and must be brought back. People go to the nearest stream or tank and catch some living creature which they bring with dance and song, and sometimes with an elaborate ceremonial, to his old home. There they believe the soul will rest for a time. Afterwards they take the ring representing the soul to the central shrine of all the members of the clan. There is thus a double mingling of a man's soul with the Departed, first with the immediate members of his own family in his own house, and then with all the members of his clan.

IX. The Pot of the Departed

Funeral rites and memorial pillars or stones emphasize the importance of the dead to the outside world and to the neighbours, but for the family, attention centres round the Hanal Kunda or the Pot of the Departed, a large earthen pot which is kept in a dark corner of the inner room of a Hill Maria house and in the store-room by the Bison-horn Maria. Among the Hill Maria this room is often called the Hanal Kholi or Room of the Departed. In addition to the Pot there is also a Hearth of the Departed on which the housewife must cook new grain at each of the First Eating festivals. In the same room various stores are kept. Among the Bison-horn Maria the room dedicated to the dead is the Wijja-lon, the third of the three buildings of which their homes are normally composed. This room is generally used as the seed-room or granary and is almost entirely filled with a large platform on which pots, baskets and sacks are placed. In one corner, however, there is the Pot of the Departed and near it the sacred hearth. The Jhoria Muria and other Muria also keep the pot inside their houses, sometimes in the ordinary store-room, sometimes in the granary. As we move east across the Kondagaon Tahsil, however, the custom shows signs of weakening and there are villages where a special permanent pot is not preserved in private houses, though there is usually one in the Hanalkot, or corporate house of the dead.

This Pot of the Departed is quite distinct from the little pots in which the soul of a dead man is brought back to the house and taken to the Hanalkot in order to be mingled with his house and clan ancestors. It is a permanent pot to which special offerings are made on all important occasions of Muria life. New grain and vegetables are cooked in it at the appropriate festivals. From time to time women put a little rice and flour into it. In the north of the State, as at Khutgaon, two pots were kept for the dead in the kitchen, one full of rice and the other empty. At every meal the housewife transferred a pinch of rice from the full into the empty pot in honour of the Departed. When the empty pot was filled members of the household, but no others, cooked and ate it. At an engagement ceremony, a cowrie is put in the pot to compensate the family ancestors for the loss of a girl from their clan.

There are various rules about this pot. No man may remove anything from it. No unmarried girl above the age of puberty may approach it. The reason for this is that the unmarried girls of the family will shortly be leaving the house and will be transferred to another clan and their connexion will be with a different pot in someone else's house. At a Muria marriage also, when the bride comes to her new home, her mother-in-law shows her the Pot of the Departed and a rice-husker saying, 'These things now are yours, care for us, honour the dead, give food to all, entertain strangers'.

X. Memorials to the Dead

Throughout Bastar menhirs are erected in memory and in placation of the dead. The Hill Maria, the majority of the Bison-horn Maria, some of the Dorla, and the Muria of the north and west still maintain their megalithic culture. Even the eastern Muria continue it in a special form that we shall presently consider. The custom has, however, been abandoned in certain areas and by certain clans.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769 The stone erected by the Muria is an upright menhir called *uraskal* (from Gondi *urasna*—to bury, and *kal*—a stone) or *kotokal*. At Surewahi, near Antagarh, the villagers called the 240 menhirs of their memorial field *khamakal*. They stand from 2 to 8 feet high, and may be 1 foot to 4 feet broad and 6 to 10 inches thick. The Muria of eastern Kondagaon sometimes set up little menhirs not more than a foot tall.

The menhirs are erected for men, women and children, and usually stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary, in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, or even in the village itself. Nearly always a small flat stone supported on two other stones is placed at the foot. This little cromlech is called the *hanal-garya*, or 'ghost-throne', and is used as an altar of sacrifice. Stones for men and women are usually put separately, and anyone who has died a suspicious death has his menhir apart from the others.

769 178 Hutton has referred to the megalithic culture of Bastar as 'now apparently rapidly decaying',[1] but the Jhoria Muria continue to erect menhirs everywhere and so do the other Muria of Narayanpur Tahsil and western Kondagaon. As we move east, however, and come more and more into the midst of Muria whose ancestors migrated south from the Central Provinces, the megalithic tradition tends to disappear, though it survives here and there, as we shall see, in curious and interesting forms.

Why should a practice so widespread, so reasonable and so harmless to mankind have disappeared in the areas I have mentioned? The answer is not an easy one. Sometimes there is an actual difficulty in getting stones, and the Muria naturally do not care to transport great slabs of rock across great distances. The reason most commonly given is expense. This is probably the true reason, for the cost of erecting a menhir is considerable. A great feast has to be given; one or more cows must be sacrificed, and perhaps pigs and chickens as well; large quantities of liquor must be provided; and the carriers of the stone must be properly rewarded. Grigson, however, discussing this problem among the Maria, thinks that the question of expense is not the real reason, pointing out that many aboriginals spend a great deal of money on their marriages; he suggests that the true reason is contact with Hinduism 'with its veneration of the cow'.[2] This may be true of a few villages near Jagdalpur or Dantewara or of those Maria and Muria who have come under the strong influence of the Palace or the cult of Danteshwari. But I believe that in spite of ardent denials to officials and visitors, beef is still eaten from one end of Bastar to the other. In fact, there is evidence that the last few years have seen a revival of beef-eating. In any case, where a forked stick takes the place of a menhir, the fork is intended as a holder over which the tail of the cow should be hung.

It is more likely, certainly along the main roads and in the east, that there is a desire to imitate the Hindu custom of erecting elaborate tombs for the dead. Many of these may now be seen, with a small shelter over them, and a pot hanging above.

The break-up of the clan system, according to which in the old days the country was divided into definite clan areas, each with a central shrine for the clan god and one central place for the erection of all the menhirs of the clan, has been an important factor. The clans now are so scattered and their *bhum* or territory is so divided up that many Muria have never been to their original *pen-rawar* or clan headquarters. The menhirs are no longer erected

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[1] J. H. Hutton, Introduction to Grigson, op. cit., p. xv.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 260.

769 at the spiritual capital of the clan-*bhum*, but are often placed in the village where the dead man used to live. I will return to this point immediately; it will 178 be sufficient to say now that the break-up of any form of organization is likely to cause a parallel decline in custom.

The association of the dead with the clan god is seen not only in the custom of erecting menhirs in the clan-*bhum*, and the use of an expression like Penhanal, but also in the Muria practice of taking the soul from the house to the Hanalkot which is always connected with one special clan. This was clearly illustrated at Phunder, where an earthen pot, full of rice, hangs above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any member of the clan dies, the mourners take his soul here, sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed chicken above the clan-pot, and thus leave the soul of the dead with his clan ancestors. Once a year, at the first New Eating ceremony, the Gaita removes the pot and changes the rice in the name of the Departed.

XI. The Erection of a Menhir

769 The Muria regard it as necessary to bring the stone for their menhirs and the wood for the manufacture of the clan gods from special forests and hills. At Kokori the Naitami clan bring their stones from Chapadongri, the Maravi from Mahadeodongri. The Kalo clan of Mahurpat used to fetch their *kotokal* stones from Boga in Kanker State. One of their ancestors, they say, turned into stone (*kal*) on a hill near this place: they stole the stone and since then have been known as Kalo.

Since the Muria generally use small stones they seldom have to quarry them, but pick them off the ground. When people go to the forest for wood or to hunt they keep a look out for suitable surface stones.

The actual erection of the stone is done by the Jhoria Muria in largely Hill Maria fashion,[1] but here it is the chelik and motiari who escort the menhir to its place with their drums and dances. In the Paralkot area, when an old man dies, an *akomāma* relative dances with an axe over his shoulder in front of the stone and the boys and girls follow drumming and singing. In Phulpar they said that on this occasion, which here they called Kal Ursana or stone-burying, an *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* or death-drum in front of the house of the deceased and chants a refrain: 'You are dead now; today we will devour your wealth with pleasure.'

I will give an example of the procedure followed at Kehalakot village. Birju Kaudo decided, as a result of dreams which troubled him, to erect a stone in memory of his parents. Stones for this clan have to be brought from a hill called Deodongri. He took with him the Gaita of the Hichami clan which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo clan, for it is the rule that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such a clan. The Gaita made a *chok* in front of the stone and offered liquor, pulse and rice, then dug it up. At first they could not get it out of the ground and the Gaita declared that the dead man was annoyed about something and they offered a black chicken to appease him. Once they had got the stone out of the ground they placed it on a specially prepared litter, covered it with fresh cloth and brought it to the *bhum* of the Kaudo clan, being careful not to take it through any village on the way.

As they brought it near, the dead man's sister and daughters stopped them, standing in a line across the path, and demanded rings. Birju gave them a

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[1] See Grigson's description, op. cit., pp. 276ff.

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole 769
and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself.

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *uraskal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, [787]
the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is.

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected 533
with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is
to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. 761
I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single
song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria 769
that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies.

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From Sonawal village comes a Halbi song used at the time of quarrying the stone.

You were on the ground, O stone!
Come now to our house, and see your children.
Once you were a man,
Now you are a god (*deo*).
You were in the grave, O man!
Today we bring you to your home.
We will all feast and drink
In memory of you.
Ri ri loyo ri ri loyo!

The next step is to bring the stone to the memorial ground. Here is another Halbi song—which can also be used at the time of placing a memorial pillar at the grave.

Hearken, brother, hearken, brother!
You were a tree, brother,
You were a stone, brother,
You were out on the hillside, brother.
Today we remember you.
Come to your house, brother, for you are growing old.
Come to the granary and live with your family.
Limb to limb we will live with you,
We will hold each other's arms.
Come to the house, come to the granary.
We have no knowledge, teach us wisdom.
The clansmen are sitting; go to the house.
The clansmen have come in crowds,
Though the court is small and narrow.
There is not enough rice,
How are we to feed the clansmen?
There is nothing in the house;
Go, brother, and give them something.
There is not enough curry,
Yet thick as sal trees are the clansmen.
There is liquor from twelve stills,
Yet there is not drink for a drink apiece.
There are twelve sacks of rice,
Yet there is not enough to give each visitor a helping.
There are five measures of salt, three measures of chilli,
Two measures of haldi, yet there is not enough.
What can we do? You teach us.
Give us food, brother, and then there'll be enough.

This stress on the practical difficulties of entertainment is typical. As we have seen, many clans have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs because of the expense. It may be noted that here a situation seems to be visualized in which the *kotokal* stone is erected at the same time that the soul is brought home to the house.

We now come to songs sung at the actual placing of the stone in position. It is probable that many of these songs are interchangeable; we must not think of them as carefully chosen and arranged as in an English hymnal.

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Re re loyo re re la! re re loyo re re la!
Re re laila he ayo ra! Ayo bāba re re la!

Sora bora dhartin ra,	Sixteen-, twelve-storied earth,
Nāwa khandi prithi ra.	Nine-storied world.
Ida dharti te mandaki ra.	Lie down here to rest.
Nike kotum ta otum ra.	We leave you in the forest.
Mamat iga mandakom ra.	We shall not be here.

This song, in sharp distinction from its predecessor, lays all the stress on the fact that the soul is to stay in its stone house in the jungle. I will now give another Gondi song used at the erection of a *kotokal.* At the end of each line there is a refrain almost like a sigh—*Ye budha, O old man!*—addressing the dead.

Yenda budha yenda budha!	Dance, old man, dance!
Nikun huri wātom ra.	We have come to see you.
Niya helār miyār rāndom ra,	Your sons and daughters have come,
Niya samdi saga wātorom.	Your relatives have come.
Udak dārango tatorom,	We've brought some liquor,
Niya bāta tatorom.	We've brought it for you.
Niya harsār huri wātorom,	We've come for your ceremonies,
Hariyer manle yetā ra.	To make you happy.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Keri gābo mendul ra.	Your body is like the pith of a plantain tree.
Bes mundāng kālku ra.	Your legs are like fine pillars (of a house).
Berel āki chhāti ra.	Your chest is like a banyan leaf.
Kurawal pile tala ra.	Your head is like an owl's.
Ali āki moha ra.	Your face is like a pipal leaf.
Usir gatta chundi ra.	Your hair is like the usri grass.
Chundi malkeh komu ra.	Shake your hair.
Tindi hursi wāyom ra.	We haven't come to watch you eat.
Hariyer manle yenda ra,	Dance full of happiness,
Niya Māhāl kiyhom ra.	We are making a palace for you.
Aga baga ron pena ra?	Where does your god come from?
Dhamda ton pena ra.	The god is from Dhamda.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Māhāl lopa barang ra?	What is inside the palace?
Sono taye jhulna ra,	If there was a golden swing inside,
Bārāng bāna āywār ra.	How beautiful it would be.
Jhulna jhule mayu ra	Swing to and fro on the swing
Nikun sewa kiyhom ra.	And we will serve you.
Nikun puja kiyākom ra,	We will give an offering for you,
Kāla menda kiyākom ra.	We will give a black ram for you.
	[*The dead man speaks*]
Tāne bhojān kewon ra,	I won't eat that,
Pujāri lāme lengra kimu ra.	I must have the long-tailed one.
Tāne bhojān kiyaka ra	I will eat that
Pujāri akar dupa kimu ra.	If you give some incense.
Achha sewa kimu ra	Serve me well
Girdā wāndāh kimu ra.	That I may be well pleased.

769 539 'The long-tailed one' mentioned in the song is, of course, a bull. Lanji-Dhamda is the traditional home of many of the northern Muria whence they migrated into Bastar.

I have already given extracts from the lengthy song recorded at Dugabangal,[1] which is sung during the transport and erection of the stone; it is interesting to note how closely life and love and death are allied in Muria thought, which regards them as a single process. The bulk of this Hanal Pata is indeed about life, and only at the tragic end do the singers discourse of death.

The song begins with some sententious lines about the universality of death.

Sora dhāru dharti roye deva,	Sixteen-storied world,
Nau khandu pirthi ra ale!	Nine-storied earth!
Singār mālor dipu roye deva;	Here is the island of mankind;
Igāy hāywālor ra ale.	Here all die.
Māne manja igāy roye deva,	Men, ants, worms,
Hurr pate igāy ra ale,	Animals are here,
Bhagavān ise pandtu ra deva,	Bhagavan has made them,
Saboy tune pandtu ra ale.	He has made them all.
Kondāng manās hurāna ra,	See with the eyes,
Kālku manās dāyna ra ale,	Walk with the feet,
Kaiku manās kām kiyāna ra,	Work with the hand,
Tori manās barkāna ra ale.	Talk with the mouth.
Idām bhagavān pandtu ra,	So has Bhagavan ordained,
Singār mālor dhelj ute ra ale.	So provided in this world.
Bāhchitek ise igāy ra,	Here men quarrel,
Koyma kitek igāy ra ale,	Here men laugh,
Dharmu kitek igāy ra,	Here is virtue,
Pāpu kitek igāy ra ale.	Here is sin.
Ide singāl duvāne ra	In this world
Rājālor ise mantor ra ale.	Live royally.
Samdhi saga igāy ra,	Here are the samdhi clans,
Bhaiband igāy ra ale.	Here too are the brother-clans.

After this the song continues along the lines which I have already given.

XIV. Substitutes for the Menhir

769 The Muria erect memorial poles and pillars as well as stones. At Modenga they described how they made a small bundle of straw with rice inside it called *dhusir* for a man and a small bamboo basket (*gappa*) for a woman. They put marks of haldi and oil as at a marriage on the wooden pillar and some also on both the baskets and give them to the sister or daughter of the dead. The girl has to take these to the house and from that day has to worship Lagar Pen who comes to the house then. Every three years thereafter she must offer a pig to Lagar Pen. If she has given birth to a male child in the interval a male pig will be sacrificed, and if a girl has been born a female pig.

It is generally said that the erection of the wooden pillar and the application of oil and haldi to it represents the second wedding of the dead. Here the pillar is usually made of saja. At Phauda the Muria described how the saja branch must be cut by a member of an *akomdma* clan after he has offered rice, pulse and liquor to it saying, 'I am going to take you in honour of the dead'. He covers it with a new cloth and ties it round with a string seven times, turning the pillar round and round. After it has been put in position, the ground in front is cow-dunged and three circles of flour are made. A pot of water is placed in the central circle and the Gaita says to the pillar, 'Now I will take you home'. A representative of the dead man's family makes a mark on it with haldi and oil and offers a little rice and a pice. Only the one representative of the bereaved family does this, though all the members of the wife-clans do so. They sacrifice two chickens and offer liquor to the pillar and go home. They kill a bullock and come back with the tail and tie this to the pillar saying, 'We have now given you everything, don't bother us or put us to any loss'. The *akomâma* relative carries the pot of water back to the house of the dead man and places it near the Pot of the Departed. They offer it liquor there and ask the dead man always to remain there and live together happily with the other ancestors.

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[1] See pp. 89-92.

The Muria sometimes make fairly elaborate graves. I saw one very interesting tomb at Gudripara. An old man named Maria Muria of the Poyami sept died in February 1940. He had cleared the jungle with his own hands, established the village, planted mango trees, founded the ghotul, ruled the community as its mukaddam for many years. So although his *bhumiyār* would normally be at Kokameta, the villagers made a tomb for him in his own village. It was built exactly a year after his death, in February 1941. Since Bhagavan had taken his spirit, a 'Bhagavan-diya' or lamp was placed on the top. All round were relics of the dead man—cloth tied to sticks, traps, baskets, pots, spoons, a spindle for preparing hemp-cord. Most interesting of all was a small menhir placed in front of the tomb. Here met in one place Muria, Gond and Hindu customs.

In Phunder I saw an elaborate tomb for a very old man, Rai Singh Thakur, who died in 1937. On the top of the tomb was an earthenware horse with an image of the dead man riding upon it and an elaborate trident. Rai Singh's son, Nergu Maravi, gave a small bullock to the Kumhar for making the horse and another bull to a Lohar for making the trident. As the dead man was a great drinker, his son and grandsons regularly offer liquor at his grave.

But the most common substitute for the memorial pillar is simply nothing at all. The graveyards and cremation grounds of the Muria dead are sad and pathetic witnesses to the vanity of human hopes and ambitions. There may be a ring attached to a tree; you may see a few stones and logs upon the grave; sometimes there are pots or poles at the four corners; there may be a decorated spire (as at Binjhli), or an iron lampstand (as at Phunder) in the centre. Nearby are a few bits of grave-furniture, a baby's cradle, some simple toys, cooking-pots for women, traps or baskets for men. But by none of these can a man's name be preserved. A few seasons wash them with their rains, a bear or hyena digs up the ground. Only the memorial stone can survive even for a while the chances of mortal life.

XV. Remnants of Megalithic Culture in Eastern Kondagaon

Throughout their entire territory the Muria preserve some form of megalithic culture, but this grows less and less prominent as we move towards the east. When we cross the road and move east towards the Orissa border, the custom of placing large menhirs almost disappears, though some tradition of using stones in memory of the dead survives.

This survival takes several different forms. Sometimes a very small stone is brought and placed on the ground near the Hanalkot or elsewhere;

769 sometimes a single stone is erected for a whole clan; sometimes a stone is combined with a modern tomb.

At Kanhera, when the time comes for performing some ceremony to content the dead, the relatives are summoned and they go to the nearest stream. A representative of the family and an *akomāma* relative go together into the water while the people on the bank call upon the dead. The two men duck under the water and one or other brings up a stone or a fish. If it is a fish they put it into the pot and take it home in the ordinary way; if it is a stone they dress it in a new cloth and carry it along till it falls down of its own accord. They bury it there, wherever it may be, put a small marriage crown upon it and anoint it with haldi, then go dancing home.

In Bopna village there is a deep pool in a neighbouring stream. When, after some years, there have died three or four people whose spirits must be mingled with their ancestors, the mourners go to this pool and make the usual offerings on the bank. Presently Bara Pen comes on one of the *akomāma* relatives and he goes down into the water calling on the spirits of the dead to draw near. As he takes one name his foot strikes against a stone and he picks it up; he takes another name and again picks up the stone below his feet. He then takes these stones to the Hanalkot (which is underneath a saja tree) and puts them on the ground saying, 'They will go down into the ground of their own accord'. The mourners anoint them with haldi and sacrifice a pig, killing it with a rice-husker. It is generally believed, wherever this custom exists, that the stones will bury themselves. Should they remain above the ground it is considered a bad omen.

In other villages the people do not go to the river but a samdhi goes to any part of the jungle where there are a lot of stones and throws rice at them saying, 'Throwing rice upon you I invite you to come'. The next morning he goes again and searches for any stone that may have fallen over during the night. This stone is supposed to contain the soul of the deceased and is taken as a memorial to the Hanalkot. In Kokori they said that when the stone fell over of its own accord, the Siraha offered it liquor and then an *akomāma* relative picked it up and carried it 'as if it were a baby' to the Hanalkot. There they covered it with cloth, tied a marriage crown and made the marriage marks of haldi, while the chelik and motiari danced before it.

In Banjora I found a different tradition. A few days after death the Muria in this village dedicate a pig, washing its feet and offering it rice. They then let it wander where it will. If after five years no wild animal has killed it they go into the forest for a memorial stone. When they have found a suitable stone, they sacrifice the pig before it. They anoint the stone with haldi and bring it to the Hanalkot, where it plants itself in the ground of its own accord.

At Randhna village, the Muria put either a wooden pillar or a stone, according to the revelation made to the Siraha in each case. An *akomāma* relative goes into the jungle to find one or the other. If a stone is indicated he sits down beside it; if a pillar, he cuts the tree, usually a saja, carves it roughly with a large ball on the head, and sits there. Then, led by the motiari and chelik with their drums, the relatives come singing and dancing and say to him, 'We have come to fetch a memorial for our dead; will you give it or no?' He says, 'Yes, I will give it'. They offer haldi and liquor to the pillar or the stone and then the *akomāma* picks it up and comes towards the village, the chelik and motiari dancing round him. Now the dead man's soul comes into the stone and guides the man here and there until it is satisfied. At last, of its own accord it falls from his arms on to the ground. As elsewhere the *akomāma* relatives cover it with cloth and put on the marriage crown. They offer a bullock and enjoy a great feast. In Randhna I saw several such pillars and near them a few memorial stones. In Kopra there were three pillars and in Charkai one. 769

In Baghbera, not far from the Orissa border, there is a magnificent mango grove with shrines for Bara Pen and the Village Mother. Not far from these shrines, under a saral tree, there is a stone about two feet high which is used as a memorial menhir for all members of the Poyami clan in that area. When any member of the clan dies the people come to the stone and make the usual offerings. When I saw it, there were two bundles of straw in the tree above, symbolizing the roof of the stone's temple, and a tethering rope which had been used for cow-sacrifice. Tied round it was a rope made of bark with its end splayed out to look like a flower. The Muria said that the origin of this was that a very old man of the Poyami clan died long ago and came to his descendants in a dream saying, 'In such and such forest there is a stone; bring it for me'. They did as he commanded and later when other members of the same clan died they too came in dreams and said, 'Take us to where our grandfather is'.

Finally there is the custom that we have already noticed, of placing a stone in front of a modern tomb. Here we can see clearly how ancient tradition survives alongside modern innovations.

XVI. The Danger of the Abnormal: Death from Wild Animals

The Muria have the most elaborate ceremonies to meet the dangers of abnormal death, for it is in their country that tigers are most common and tragedies most frequent. When such an incident occurs, the chelik collect the remains of the deceased and his possessions at the very place of death and burn them. They blow a hunting-horn over the pyre and run away. 766

A day or two later the male members of the house go to the spot with other villagers. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make an image of the dead man; with rice-flour they make an image of the tiger. They place these together inside two circles made of flour and haldi, and draw a line of flour representing a rope to join the two together. The Gaita sacrifices chickens and eggs, saying, 'Go and take your dog to some other land. Tie it up properly there and keep it safe. Don't bring it here, we don't want any dogs here'. Then he hits and breaks the model tiger with a sickle crying, 'Tiger! Tiger!'

The chickens are now cut up into a great many little bits, and some of these are given to members of the party and roasted and eaten on the spot. Bones and leaves used for this little feast must be buried carefully, for if a witch got hold of them she could use them to bring the tiger back. The party now breaks up and each member takes a solitary and zigzag route home, throwing away the little bits of chicken as he goes. The idea of this is that if the ghost of the deceased tries to return to his village, he will be puzzled by the roundabout route and will be so busy eating the bits of chicken that he will never get there.

Women do not attend this ceremony, for if a woman's shadow were to fall on the materials of the feast, the tiger would come again. But if a woman is killed by a tiger, a digging-stick is thrown into the ashes of the pyre with the idea that her ghost will take it to dig roots in the jungle and not trouble the people in the village.

After a few days all those who took any active part in the cremation ceremony—such as carrying the remains or preparing the pyre—go to the place

766 and make customary offerings in the name of the tiger, the dead man and Bagharam Pat to clear themselves of infection. If this is not done, the tiger haunts their dreams.

After an interval, which varies from a week to three years, the people go to bring the soul of the dead man to the proper place, where it will be mingled with his ancestors. The household prepares a feast and invites all relatives. At the east of the village they build an open shed with two poles in the middle and on the floor trace a square with rice-flour. A small pot is filled with flour and put in the middle of the square, and above it another empty pot closed with a lid. A ring, threaded on a fine cord and tied between the two poles above the pot, is swung to and fro. The elders sit round and sing the Burkal Pata, or Tiger Song, which I will quote presently. As they sing this, the dead man's soul comes, the string breaks and the ring falls on to the lid of the pot.

The Gaita at once removes the upper pot and examines the flour in the lower vessel. If there is a 'tiger's mark' on the flour, they believe that a tiger will again devour the man at his next birth—and since the man will be reborn in his own family this means, of course, that the tiger will again visit and harry the same village. If there is a cow's mark, the more Hinduized Muria say that the dead man will be reborn as a cow and then be eaten by a tiger. But if there is a man's footprint, all will be well. They then take the ring, which is known as *Bāgh-hanāl mundi*, to a tree (usually a saja tree) nearby, and hang it up there saying, 'Now this is your home; live here and don't trouble us'.

After this the people feast, but not on meat. When all is over they throw the pots, leaves and leaf-cups into the river, bathe and return home.

A cat's footprint on the floor is considered very ominous. 'When a man is eaten by a tiger', I was told at Remawand, 'his soul dwells in the tiger's tail. On the same day of the week on which he was cremated, a small cat forms itself out of the ashes of the pyre and wanders away into the jungle. If a man sees it and recognizes it, calling it by the name of the dead man, it disappears. If not, and if the cat looks at the man, and he says nothing, another tiger will come to trouble the village.'

If a man is killed by a bear, the same ceremonies are observed.

The Burkal Pata, which is sung while the 'ring of the tiger-ghost' swings to and fro above the earthen pots, is often dragged out to an enormous length. It consists of a formula, which can be repeated as often as necessary, accusing one god after another of having sent the tiger which killed the man.

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Porro sātu dīpu ra.	In the Upper World are seven islands.
Ale ale ale ale!	*Ale ale ale ale!*
Ariy sātu dīpu ra.	In the Lower World are seven islands.
Ide dīpu aroy ra.	Bad is this Middle World.
Nāte māye talur ra:	There is the Village Mother:
Awe sangu manong ra:	She did not help him:
Awe tinda hitang ra.	She gave him up to be devoured.
Tāna hawār badu ra?	Who follows after her?
Use mudiyāl penu ra.	There is Use Mudial Pen.
Nima bāra tinnī ra?	Was it you who ate him?
Nima baliy hati ra;	You were wandering round about;
Nai pairsi hati ra.	You had a dog with you.
Bāra joring nai ra.	There are twelve pairs of dogs.
Nima chuchoh kihi ra.	You gave orders to the dog.

Gudding oda bīdu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupe lekha poyāndu ra.	It caught him like a rat. 766
Hajār rupiya ta jiwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees. 539
Jiwa nuksān kili ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Ade jiwa pudio ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bada diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barak mator ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenk ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinwi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nihume ijor itan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu āyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāte berāng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hāyna kago autu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenk ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyālor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abe ise titur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Māhun jori tāstur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tanke ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. THE DANGER OF THE ABNORMAL: THE ONDAR MUTTAI

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The 775

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[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 93), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 308), Kawar (III, p. 398), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sansia (IV, p. 498) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes, nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India. 171

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zemindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churelin or Churel, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, 171

115 reason for this may be that just as the ghosts of virgins and the unmarried are dangerous because they have missed the most delightful, the most exciting, the most interesting thing in life and are therefore supposed to be anxious after death to revenge themselves on mankind, so also the woman who dies during the process of parturition is suddenly deprived of the chief privilege and wonder of womanhood—the joy of being a mother. Bitter and disappointed she seeks an appalling vengeance upon men.

In Bastar this fearful being is known in Halbi as Churlin or Bandrin and sometimes as Raksin or Banra-raksin. The Muria, however, know her as Ondar Muttai. This means the Old Bee Woman, implying I think that she comes upon a man with the ferocity and speed of a swarm of bees.

The Ondar Muttai is described with every circumstance of fear and horror.[1] She has only one breast, so long that it is usually slung over her shoulder. She has teeth long as the palm of your hand, an enormous head, great round eyes, a bulbous nose and ears like winnowing-fans. Her feet are red as fire, but curiously enough are not described as turned back to front as in the rest of India. She dances with her breast flung across her back and calls to men to come to her. When they hear her voice their legs tremble and fail beneath them. She lives in the forest or on the bank of a lake, and on the day the cuckoo first sings you can see her eyes across the water. In some villages, there is a belief that you are safe as long as you are in the company of buffaloes.

The Ondar Muttai appears to human beings in several different forms. Towards women and children she nearly always displays her dangerous and terrifying aspect. When a child is born and the placenta is not expelled, the ghost of the mother after death pursues young children. She catches them and carries them about, holding them against her breast. This is so terrible that the children weep and weep and cannot be consoled.

When the Ondar Muttai catches a man, sometimes she tickles him until he is so weak and exhausted that she can do her will upon him. Sometimes she says to him, 'Will you eat black *gur* or white *gur*?' If he answers, 'I'll

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171 pp. 269ff., who stresses her reversed feet and her power of destroying young men. Russell and Hiralal describe Churel superstitions and precautions among the Gurao who bury a lemon under the corpse, and the Kurmi who place thorns above it. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 180f. and IV, p. 78.

The Uraon believe that the Churel destroys men by tickling them—S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), p. 96—and Dehon describes how they prevent the return of the ghost by twisting round the feet of the corpse and driving long thorns into them. They bury the body face downwards with the bones of a donkey.—P. Dehon, *The Religion and Customs of the Uraons*, *Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), pp. 139f. The Birhor, like the Muria, do not admit the Churel to the company of the ancestral dead and only women may bury the corpse.—S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 267ff. The Santal Churin licks the flesh from a man's bones. At burial long thorns are driven into her feet to prevent her running after her victims.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 411. The Chenchu appear almost unique in burying such women 'in the usual manner'.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), p. 154.

Frazer has collected many references to similar beliefs for the Lushai, Kachin, Shan, Palaung as well as for the Malays, the Kayan of Borneo and the Kiwai of British New Guinea among others. Similar ideas are found again among the peoples of Northern Nigeria and Rhodesia and even among the ancient Mexicans. 'Possibly the fears and superstitions gathering about this ghost are world-wide. See, for full references, J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 182ff.

[1] The Kharia believe that her malignant power 'is believed to be foreshadowed by the trouble she gave to her people in her last days of life, the degree of deformity and fearfulness that her features assume on death and the trouble that her corpse, by the violent contortions of its limbs on its way to the grave, gives to the pall-bearers'.—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 302.

eat black *gur*' she fills his mouth with black stones and so kills him, then removes his brain and eats it. 115

She is said to be most powerful on the night of the anniversary of her death.

Sometimes, however, the Ondar Muttai approaches men in very different guise. In her enchanting aspect, one is tempted to describe her as the personification of the erotic dream. Thus the headman of Ulera village described how once in a dream a lovely girl came to him. Her hair beautifully combed, her neck adorned with necklaces, many combs in her head, she sat down beside him and smiled at him. 'Seeing her my mind was for her and I wondered if I could get her. Then she came and sat very close to me. She seemed to have large and lovely breasts. I caught them with my hand but there was nothing there. Then I went to her but found she had no vagina. All my power went from me and then I saw that she was a hideous ghost with one long breast across her shoulder and I awoke. All the next day I felt very ill.' This dream is typical of scores of similar experiences. 115 115 154

There is another very curious type of encounter with this ghost. All over Bastar (and I have found the same tradition in the Central Provinces) there is the belief that a man can capture an Ondar Muttai, 'bind' her with his charms and keep her as a wife.[1] I will give a few examples of this: 115

> In Patlabera, near Keskal, a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his *chikhāra*. A Churlin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and several children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

A similar story, this time of a Ganda called Khokoya, comes from Bakrabera; another of a Rawat or Ahir from Chingnar, another of a Marar in Kolur, yet another of a Rawat from Milkulnar. A realistic tale comes from Kumli village:

> One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he 'bound' her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the ghost is not an aboriginal but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals

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[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 367ff. Enthoven, whose reports are sometimes to be received with caution, says that in Bombay there are three classes of 'Chudels'. The Poshi Chudel, a woman who has not enjoyed the pleasures of life, fondles children and renders good service to her bereaved husband. The Soshi Chudel was persecuted in life: she dries up the blood of men and revenges herself upon her family. The Toshi Chudel was a woman who loved her husband and still, as a ghost, brings him pleasure.—R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 196.

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

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766 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[761] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished. 775 769

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference. 769

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

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[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Magbeda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Baghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connexion here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MURIA RELIGION

I. INTRODUCTORY

771 883 ALTHOUGH this book does not profess to be a study of Muria culture as a whole, it is necessary to give an outline of the religion of the tribe because the ghotul is itself a religious institution and has its share in the worship of the gods, while many of the chelik are already being trained as mediums and priests.

The ghotul is a *thirtha-sthān*, a holy place, as a Hinduized Muria explained to me; you cannot commit sin within its walls. It was founded by Lingo Pen, noblest of Gond cult-heroes, and no evil dream or power of witch or warlock can invade its sanctuary. Chelik and motiari undertake dancing expeditions in honour of the gods; they visit the great clan festivals and dance at them; at the New Eating ceremonies chelik are employed as cooks and motiari gather leaves for plates and cups. In the ceremonial hunts before certain festivals, the chelik play a major part, and they have special duties in connexion with the first ritual cutting of forest clearings. In some villages it is the chelik who roll the Gaita in mud at the Wijja Pandum and carry him home on their shoulders.

The ghotul also is itself the scene of occasional religious activities. In Palli-Barkot and neighbouring villages the blessed seed collected at harvest-time is hung up in the ghotul until it is needed for the first sowing. On the eve of many festivals the Kaser-Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure chastity for himself and the chelik. Dassera and Diwali are observed by the ghotul members in their own way, and they keep other special festivals which I will describe in detail later when I return to a fuller discussion of the ghotul's part in the religious life of the tribe.

771 Muria religion is undoubtedly a religion of the Hindu family with special affinities to its Shaivite interpretation, yet at the same time it is but little 'Hinduized'. It remains a special and characteristic faith, a logical entity which can be described and recognized. It acknowledges a large number of deities whom it pictures in a simple and homely manner. It has a definite priesthood and a body of mediums who communicate with the gods while in a state of trance. It erects shrines and temples to the gods and builds small huts for the tendance and placation of the dead. It consecrates every rural activity by sacrifice and a sacramental meal. It purifies and protects the village by a series of ceremonies, and it directs its beneficial power against the energies of witch and warlock.

The subject is a large one, and I cannot hope to treat it fully here. But I will give a brief account of the Muria gods, the Muria priesthood and the shrines in which worship is performed. I will describe the customary methods of worship and sacrifice and consider the trance in which the gods make their wishes known. Certain phallic elements in the worship must also be described. I will then give a brief outline of the festivals and ceremonies by which the whole of Muria life is brought under the sway of religion, and conclude by giving detailed descriptions of festivals I have myself observed. We shall then be in a position to see more fully how the ghotul fits in to this great complex of belief and practice.

MURIA RELIGION

II. The Origin of the Gods

A Hindu lives by ceremonies; a Muria lives by his gods.—Muria proverb

Muria religion is a blend of the tremendous and the homely; at one moment the peasant trembles before a display of overwhelming dynamic energy, at the next he is abusing his god for flirting with a goddess of his own clan. The Muria take a great interest in the domestic affairs of their gods; they are much better acquainted with divine than human genealogies; they are proud of the vast confusion and multiplicity of the Bastar deities. 116

For there are, they say, 'more gods in Bastar than anywhere in India'. 113
Many legends describe their immigration, their birth, their movements from place to place. 'Long ago'—the story comes from Benur— 116

> before the Bastar Raj had come into being, Raja Dokara lived in Warangal.[1] His younger brother was Gotal Dokara. When Danteshwari Mai came to Bastar, Raja Dokara followed her as the Lamhada of Budha Dokara's sister, Pat Rani. Gotal Dokara accompanied them, but he went to live in the Marian Raj in order to avoid his brother. Raja Dokara settled in Bara Dongar and was married to Pat Rani. From them were born Hunga Dokara, Pahedunga, Waikirunge, Guttehunge and Lingo Dokara.
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> In Bara Dongar, Budha Deo and Samrat Dokara his brother had many daughters. Four of these were carried off by the four elder sons of Raja Dokara. Budha Dokara and Samrat Dokara had seven score sons and seven score daughters. They said to Lingo Dokara, 'These are for you'. But Lingo was very pure. He said, 'No, I do not desire to marry'. So the four brothers said, 'Well, you stay at home and we'll give these girls villages instead'. So the four brothers put the rest of the girls into a fish-basket and sat on the back of a tortoise. By their magic the tortoise turned into an elephant. Seated on the elephant the brothers rode slowly round the Bastar Raj. As they went they gave one girl to four villages, another to seven, and each girl became the Mata Devi of her village.
>
> The tortoise moved very slowly and the brothers put *bhilwa* oil under its tail. So passed many days. The four brothers' wives took red cucumbers and put them in swings and rocked them to and fro, saying 'These are our children'. Now their servant was Kadrengal. They sent him to find their husbands. There was only one girl left in the fish-basket. Her name was Tallur Muttai. The brothers threw her with the basket into Paramwar village and went home, for they could hear from afar the singing of their wives. But Kadrengal met Tallur Muttai and said to her, 'Let us live here together'. They were not married, but lived there as mistress and servant. She used to send him to make people ill, and thus they got food-sacrifice and made a scanty living.

There follows an account of the brothers' return home, their suspicion of their wives—'Who is the father of these children?'—the testing of Lingo and his vindication. In this version of the tale it is Tallur Muttai who goes with Kadrengal to bring Lingo out of the iron bin in which he is being roasted

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[1] In Metawand, the villagers told us that 'the gods used to live in Warangal. Thence they climbed by a red thread into the Upper World. Looking down they saw Bastar and charmed with the sight descended by the silkworm's thread into the Bastar hills and lived there'.

773 776 to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

[773] This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology. The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

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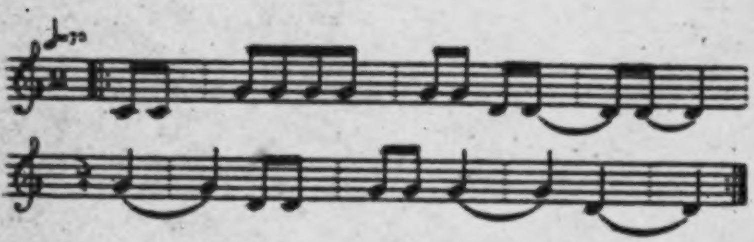

776 539

Aho reraloyo rerela rer loyo rer loyo aha rerela!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
    Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
    Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
    Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
    Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutela.
Oho the many baby stars!
    Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamadaria Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
    Give him a good Johar.

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[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

MURIA RELIGION

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In the banyan is the cat,
In the pipal Mirchuk Rai,
In the deep gully Bhutuk Rai,
In the Hutang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give them a good Johar.

Near Raughat is Talachetang Rai,
In Jabkastang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give him a good Johar.

To the Rau of the pass, Johar.
To Tipagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Hitagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Kodagardha Rau Rai, Johar.

Below the pass is Maoli Rai,
Below the hill is Maoli Rai,
In Dantegarh is Maoli Rai,
In Antagarh is Maoli Rai.
Give, give a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Kana Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother Bechor's son]
Bechor Kodor Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Budha Mudial Penur Rai [*Akomāma* to Lingo]
Guta Mudial Penur Rai
Dewan Mudial Penur Rai
Kada Hural Penur Rai
Kokcr Mudial Penur Rai
Oche Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kola Koso Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Halel Dokari Muttai Penur Rai
Halai Dokari Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's sister]
Hirgiri Penur Rai [son of Halai Dokari]
Son Kumar Penur Rai [son of Kanda Dokara]
Netturgundi Penur Rai [son of Lingo]
Lingo Mudial Penur Rai.

Oho the eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai!
The hunting horn hanging from his shoulder,
The Madan Parai drum at his loins,
The Paijna Rai (anklets) on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai (fiddle) across his chest,
The Jhikar Rai (Jew's harp) with the wind passing through his nose,
The Sulur Rai (flute) played with his mouth.
Give him a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Dandki Dokari Penur Rai,
Sunga Deo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]

776 Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
539 Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

776 By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

[152 593] The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

776 773 Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

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[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

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[524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, [177] some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief.

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

776 time to time, the Siraha selects one or two for special worship and attention. The cult of the gods, therefore, moves to and fro, now illuminating a forgotten deity, now strengthening the influence of the more powerful. There is nothing
771 fixed, definite, logical or formulated about Muria religion, for here the power of the prophet and magician is greater than that of the priest. Muria religion is thus dynamic and essentially modernist. It can always adapt itself to new conditions. There is nothing traditional or orthodox in its temper.

The Supreme Being

776 The Muria have a belief, which is probably very old, in a Supreme Being, whom they call variously Mahapurub, Ispural and Bhagavan. Mahapurub, which may be literally translated the 'Great East', perhaps has reference to the Sun. Bhagavan is, of course, the common Hindu name for the adorable god of Bhakti worship. Mahapurub and Bhagavan are not distinguished in Muria thought: the difference between them is linguistic, Mahapurub being used in the exclusively Halbi-speaking areas. Ispural presents more of a problem. Grigson found the word in use in a few Hill Maria villages bordering the Muria country. 'Ispural would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was. . . It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.'[1] But to Koppers 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory'. The word Ispural, he thinks, is 'genuinely Dravidian' and suggests a very old belief in a Supreme Being.[2] Like Grigson, I was unable to discover anything about Ispural, though he appears in the song given on p. 169 as one of the deities accused of having caused a man to be killed by a tiger. He is, however, acquitted of the charge and the death is ascribed to the jealousy of the Departed. But the word is known right across northern Bastar and I agree with Koppers that it probably represents an ancient element in Muria theology.

Mahapurub, to call him by what is his common name, is the creator of Nadumbhum or the Middle World. He lives in Porrobhum, or Upper World, attended by his seven daughters, the divine motiari, and from this post of vantage exercises a rather sketchy control over human affairs. He created the world, but only with the help of Lingo and Bhimul. He made mankind, but so carelessly that many people turned into witches and warlocks. It took him a long while to discover how to ensure that men and women would die and thus provide him with a sufficient supply of *jiwa* or living souls. He appears to exercise no control at all on the daily life of mortals; he does men no good, but neither does he do them any harm. As a result there is not a single shrine for him throughout the Muria country. He receives no sacrifices and in ordinary thought is largely ignored. As the originator of death, however, it is supposed that when a man dies it may be at his command.

Both Bhagavan and Mahapurub appear in Muria folk-tales though I am not sure how far the picture given there is to be taken in a theological sense. Each deity has seven daughters, though we hear nothing of wives.[3] Every evening the seven daughters go in their flying chariot to visit Mahapurub and to dance before him.[4] In one tale the seven daughters get annoyed with the hero and build a dam to stop the rain falling on his fields. He climbs up a

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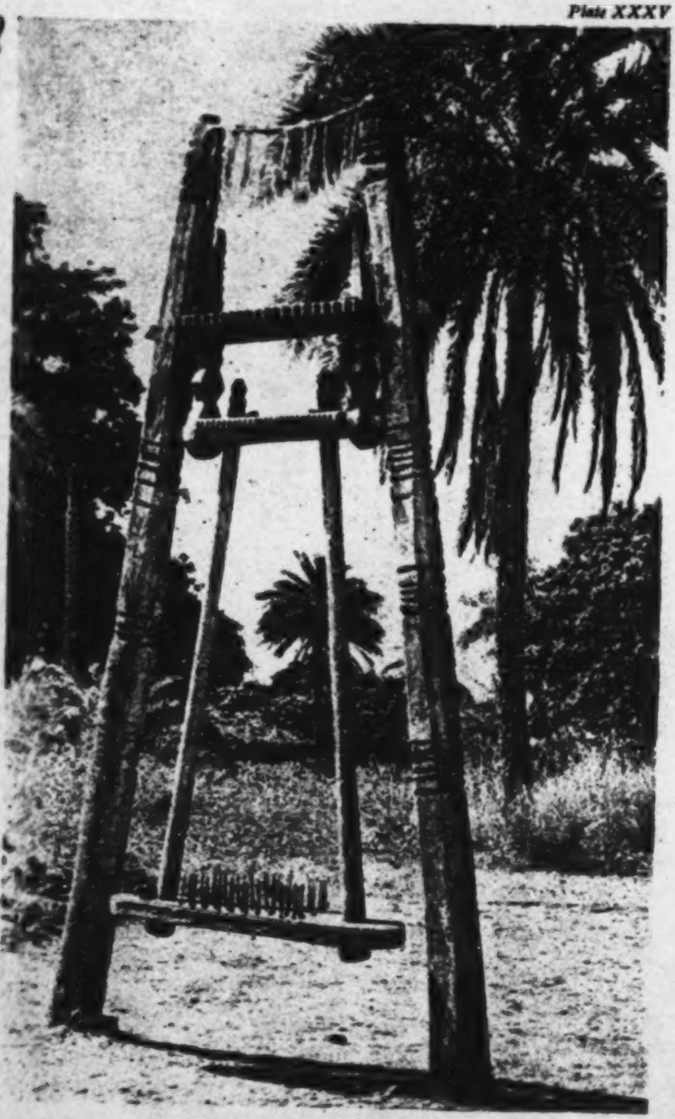
[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 244f.

[2] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV/XXXVI (1940-1), p. 307.

[3] The Bhil, however, 'are all of one opinion that Bhagwan has no wife and no children'. Koppers, op. cit., p. 292.

[4] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 8.

Plate XXXV



Siraha's swing at Alor

[p. 180(A)]

silken thread to ask Bhagavan himself for water. On the way he discovers the dam and destroys it: the girls beat him. Bhagavan intervenes and tells his daughters not to give trouble to human beings.[1]

Mahapurub is shown living in the Upper World and curious about conditions of life elsewhere. He sends a crow to tour the three Worlds and discover where the greatest happiness is to be found. The crow reports that it is in the Middle World. The youngest daughter insists on going to see, so Mahapurub calls a spider and makes it spin a thread to connect the Upper and the Middle Worlds.[2]

In the tales the Supreme Being appears far more accessible than we should imagine from a study of the theology. A hero goes to Mahapurub's palace to ask a boon and a magic goat and the seven daughters are given with a father's blessings.[3] Another hero goes on pilgrimage to Mahapurub and has all his problems solved.[4]

Bara Pen

The Great God of the Gond, it has always been said, is Bara Deo, Bhera Pen, Budha Deo. He is supposed to live in the sacred saja tree and to be more honoured by the Gond than any other. In Bastar, however, this deity is not specially worshipped by the Muria.[5] Among them the name Bara Pen or Budha Dokara is the name of a very ancient clan-god, and nowadays, whenever the Muria are at a loss to give a name to a clan-god, they call him Bara or Budha Pen. There are indeed a bewildering number of Anga, flags and Gutal with these names. At Chingnar there is an Anga who is worshipped by the Naitami, Tekami, Maravi, Poyami and Parchapi. He is called Budha Dokara. At Kharkagaon there is another Anga with the same name connected with the Duga, Kalo, Halami, Dhurwa, Buyi and other clans. At Kursai Budha Pen is the god of the Komra and Kaudo clans. At Kokori he is the god of the Uika and Wadde clans; at Metawand of the Partabi and Ori; at Lanjora of the Poyami. I have no doubt that there are other shrines in his honour in many other villages.

The extent of the cult of Bara Pen in Bastar might be supposed to indicate his importance, but he is not one of those deities who is constantly remembered at festivals or funerals. I think that his cult is extensive largely because his name is convenient. Bara Pen, a great god, Budha Deo, a venerable god; it is an obvious and useful title.[6]

The Earth Mother

The earth or *bhum* is the ultimate source of life and power who manifests herself in all the other deities. Men are the children of earth, fed and loved by her. She is personified in Tallur Muttai who appears frequently in legends and songs. She is one of the gods living in the ghotul to protect the children;

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[1] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 31-2.

[2] Ibid., pp. 139f. [3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid., pp. 283ff.

[5] 'As far as I have ascertained the Marias and Murias do not worship Burra Deo.' —W. H. Shoobert in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 75. This is going too far.

[6] 'The Gonds are, however, found to have one common object of worship called according to the linguistic peculiarities of the locality, Bura Deo, Bada Deo, or Badial Pen. Pen and Deo mean the same, but the signification of Bura or Bada, I am not sure of. Major Macpherson tells us that Bura Pen, the Kandh god, means "the god of light". Mr Hislop no doubt rightly conjectures that Badial Pen, whom he also calls Badhal Pen, and the Kandh god is the same; but he translates Badhal in one place (page 14) as "the old god", though in a note to the same page he quotes as if affirming the *Calcutta Review* in translating the word "Sun-god". If Bura Deo means "old god" it should, I suppose, be written "Burha", but in the way the word is pronounced, I do not detect the aspirate.' —Dalton, op. cit., p. 281.

she has a special concern for the success of the crops; according to some legends, she invented the sago-palm. The Muria offer sacrifices to her on all the chief occasions of their lives.

Nowadays, however, the Muria have got into a great muddle about Mother Earth and her associated deities. She is now often identified with the goddess Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of Bastar. Tallur Muttai, under Hindu influence, turns into Mati Deo, then she changes her sex back again to Danteshwari Matal. She is also often mixed up with the Gaon Devi, or any other Matal or Maoli who may be worshipped in the village. It is impossible to expect any kind of consistency, for the Muria are not trained theologians, but it is fairly safe to say that when the Muria worships either Gaon Matal, Jimmedarin Matal, Thakurain, Danteshwari Matal, Maoli or indeed any other Matal, he is really thinking of Tallur Muttai or the Earth. In the prevailing Shaivite atmosphere of Middle India, all nature deities are inevitably personified as female.

The Earth Mother, in whatever form she takes, generally has a special shrine in her honour. She may be represented by a wide variety of symbols. Her special priest is the Kaser-Gaita, who makes offerings to her on every occasion affecting the life or honour of the village.

The association of this goddess with the ghotul is not perhaps very close, but in some places she is believed to live there with Kadrengal, her official consort, and with Lingo. There is indeed a story that Tallur Muttai was in love with Lingo and, after murdering one of his wives, tried vainly to win him to herself. Before going out on any dancing expedition and at their return to the village, the girls and boys make suitable offerings at the shrine of the Earth Mother. They remember her also when they go to hunt or fish, when they make a new drum, when they worship the drums before a marriage and when they accompany a corpse to its grave.

The Earth Mother in the form of Danteshwari Mai or Matal is rapidly growing in importance and distinction throughout Bastar. In almost every village now there is some shrine or symbol in her honour. The arrival of her litter at a festival is the signal for a special demonstration. She excites the same vague but patriotic sentiment that the Church of England arouses in many Englishmen. She is a national institution, and though few Muria of the North can have visited her temple at Dantewara, a good many must have seen her coming in her panoply and attended by her priest on his elephant for the Dassera festival at Jagdalpur.

To enable the reader to understand the feeling of the Bastar Hindus towards this goddess I will quote from a communication made to me by the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator of the State.

> Danteshwari is the family goddess of the Ruler. She is the Adi Shakti, the origin of all creation. She has no beginning or end and is not limited by space. She is the creative faculty of Brahma. When the whole creation is annihilated, she remains in Brahma, as a plant remains in a seed and other creations reappear through her. That power is symbolized as feminine since the generative function is a woman's attribute. She is all powerful and has a dazzling beauty. Her eight hands and the lion on which she rides are symbols of her power. She takes shape to rid the world of sinners and make it happy for the pious. She appeared when Mahishasur had spread terror in the world and killed him. She showers power, strength and happiness on her devotees. Sacrifices of goats and buffaloes are made in her name. The flesh of sacrificed goats is taken by men of the upper and

lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State. 776

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh. 776 648

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die. [778]

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttal, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place. 776

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttal, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttal and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jaha chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding but over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

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[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh.
[2] See page 40.

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning[1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

[796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

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[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 95; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 78 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhima in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimador who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

MURIA RELIGION

The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings. 776

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl[1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig. 776 782

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Laru pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and 776 [171]

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her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimador's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Saorias of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 46ff.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 29 and 135 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Asoka near Betiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the lion pillar at Bakhra known as the pole of the baskets of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Sterndale, *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1887), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Ashrael and her companion Joda are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 409ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 91–119.

776 dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, 'If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you gifts'. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go where it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully divided and given to each of the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has been produced. The men sow this seed in a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as the Kotwar for this special duty and he goes round to the houses of all those relations who three years before had shared in the ceremony. Once again all the female members of the family must come. Every household invited must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he has grown. They dig a pit and bring the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the original ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the House of the Departed to satisfy Kondi Pen.

The Divine Motiari

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Throughout India the villagers dread and take endless trouble to placate the Matal or Village Mothers.[1] These dangerous and malignant beings are the cause of disease, domestic tragedy and accident. It would be an interesting subject for psycho-analytic research to discover why the beautiful name 'Mother' should be given to these bloodthirsty deities.

But beside the Mothers there are the Maidens. These too are known in other parts of India.[2] In northern Bastar at least, as we might expect in a country populated by charming and graceful motiari, the Maidens or Kanyang are generally regarded as benevolent though, like the motiari, they expect to receive proper attention. It is not, I think, fanciful to call these the 'Divine Motiari' and indeed the seven chief Kanyang Sisters have the names Belosa, Dulosa, Alosa, Sulki, Lahari, Jalko and Malko, all of which are the titles of motiari. It is said that in the ghotul these titles are specially treasured and fortunate since they are the names of the Kanyang in whose honour the girls dance the Diwali dances.

776 There are Naiads, Kanyang, Divine Motiari—call them what you will—of the forest and of the water. One Kanyang lives in the sago-palm; another flashes across the sky in the shape of lightning; another presides over the salt-lick. In all they number seven score.

Let us examine some of them and their character more carefully. Perhaps the most important of the Kanyang is the Yer Kanyang, the rather lonely maiden who lives in streams and rivers. When she hears the music of the dance floating across at night from the nearest ghotul, she grows very sad and goes to find some motiari living wretched and ashamed because of the menstrual contagion that is on her. Then the two dance together in the world of dreams all night. This maiden is honoured by the Muria when they go to fish. Gifts are promised before they begin and if the catch is good they always remember her. When Gadru of Chaniyagaon was nearly drowned as a child, the Siraha diagnosed the reason in the failure of the boy's father to sacrifice a pig to the Yer Kanyang as he had promised to do after a good catch of fish.

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[1] See Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 111ff.
[2] See Dalton, op. cit., p. 188; Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 112.

A bride going from Amasara to Nayanar to be married gave the Water Maidens in a river she crossed two rings: 'As we give rings to our motiari she gave, for the Maidens of the Water are also motiari.' What is called the Neyi Maur or the first wedding crown, worn when haldi is put on the body of bride and bridegroom, is thrown into the river after the marriage, for the Kanyang of the water. After the cowhide for a drum has been soaked in water, offerings are made to her for fear she has been defiled. This Kanyang, who is called Yer Kanyang, Julan Kanyang and sometimes Bisran Kanyang, like all such beings is sometimes touchy and may attack men in the form of a crocodile. When this happens, the villagers must give her large gifts, a pig, eggs, seven rings of aonra, [782] red powder for her forehead and bangles for her wrists. In Matawal they said that when they went to fish they always remembered the Bisran Kanyang and when they got a good catch gave her such feminine finery as they thought she would like. Bisran Kanyang is said to give special help to witches.

Another Kanyang of the water, called Ghat Kanyang, lives in the place where people bathe and draw water. When they take an Anga to bathe it at its annual festival they make offerings to this Kanyang saying, 'Be with us to help us. Here we drink water, here our children bathe. Let there be no disease, let no witch overlook the water; protect us and we will worship you every year'.

Bahi Kanyang lives in very small streams and is offered bangles made of weeds and other gifts to ensure good rain and plenty of water in the rice-fields. Chapar Kanyang, the Maiden of the salt-lick, lives in the place where cattle go to lick the salty earth, and there every year the Bhum-Gaita goes with the villagers to make the usual offerings in order to free the cattle from disease.

Kanyang of the fields, such as Berha Kanyang, preside over the crops. When the rice is ripening the Muria offer a pig for the village and a chicken for each house so that the grain may be good, undamaged by wild animals and not destroyed by witches. In Gudla people said that there were two Kanyang in the fields; one called Wujri is benevolent and ensures a good crop; the other, Bagri Kanyang, is responsible when the crop fails. In Matawal, the Maiden of the field was called Ras Kanyang and at Binjhli, Dhand Kanyang. Here they said that at harvest time the Gaita went to every field with chickens, vermilion and the new rice and offered it to Dhand Kanyang and Dhand Rau. Only when this had been done could they cut the crop.

In the forest lives Sukhli Kanyang in her little hut. Should a cow wander near, Sukhli Kanyang catches it and sucks the milk.

The Kanyang of the sago-palm, which was originally a feather-tuft in a motiari's hair, is described elsewhere.[1] This Mur Kanyang, as she is sometimes called, gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul'. Then she 'marries' and the juice ceases to flow. This Kanyang is subject to a menstrual period during which no one should drink the juice. Regular offerings are made to her when a tree is tapped for the first time.

Local Gods

In addition to the gods whose cult is more or less universal throughout the Muria country, there are many local gods who have generally come into being as a result of a dream or some magician's diagnosis of the cause of a calamity.

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[1] See p. 55.

776 Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

776 796 Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

776 [513 857] In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. THE CLAN-GOD

614 776 We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

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[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

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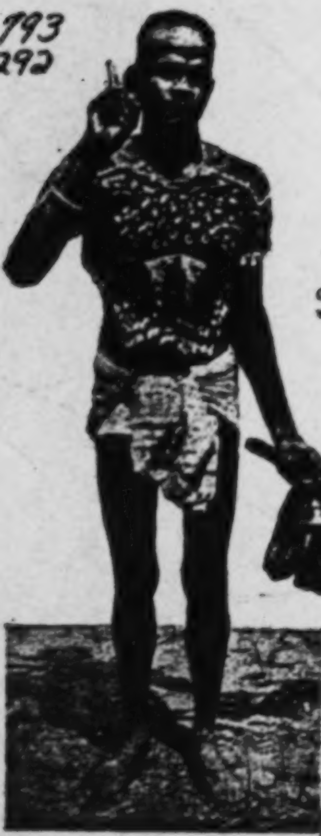
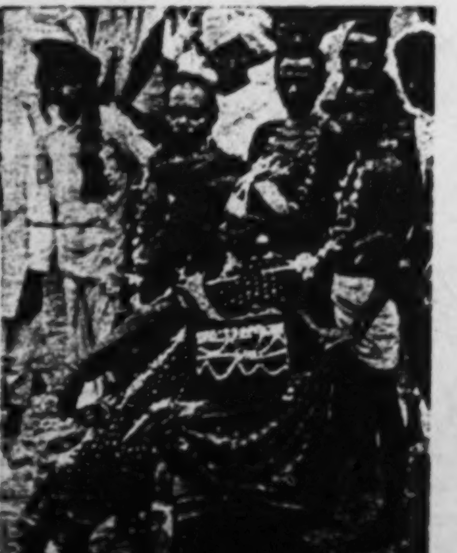
Plate XXXVII



Gaita of Almer in trance,
wearing cowrie jacket



Priest of Pendrawandin
at the Kondagaon Marhai

[188a]

Plate XXXVIII

Siraha carrying Anga and Gutal at Adner

Litter of the Village Mother outside her shrine at Masora

[p. 188(B)]

MURIA RELIGION

614 Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when
the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old
776 clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former
days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of
778 India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira
wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The
776 central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to
enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central
614 pole has a curious head called *hoho* which resembles that of a snake or bird.
At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. Bands of silver may be hammered round them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bāri*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

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[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

778 multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an
Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole
776 with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached
to a bamboo staff.

614 The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon *bhum* (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokāra and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods. 778 776 614

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage. [835]

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

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[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darimo*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

778 members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At
Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging
776 above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry
614 his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing
the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will
764 henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting
776 witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At
the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur
778 Tahsil.

754 On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened. 776

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[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

778 754 Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of *sonta* leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kes* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'. 776 778 754 787

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp. 776 778 754

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

[754] The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice,
returned home the next day.

778 Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the
aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to
776 the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are
keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It
776 is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected
778 with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the
cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried
769 on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central
787 Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is
754 an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2]
At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

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[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga)", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'.—Nandolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just 754
given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally
believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction 769
about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected
with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of 776
a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than 778
at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually
developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last
the '*Anga*' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn 776
Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his
imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The 787
Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for
burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he
admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to
understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the
land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, 776
which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of
the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included 174
the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the
Atharva Veda, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous
way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion
between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many
cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar
clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. MURIA TEMPLES

Mān ta pen nahi ta pathar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave- 778
house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially
erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with
that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4]
On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage'
of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those
peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking
exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing 778
but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is
worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village
Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are 346
several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes
these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as
for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot
where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like
a little village.

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[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.

[2] Dey, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

778 346 [532] The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Danteshwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

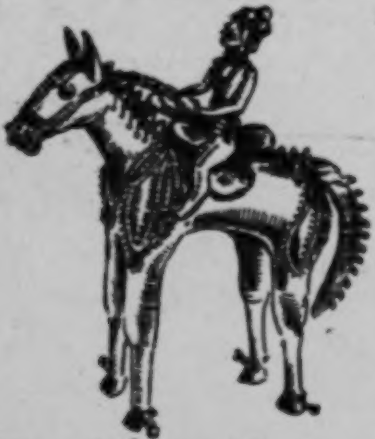
FIG. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Height 9¼″

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the mediums can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

831 On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Bayanar.

346 I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-rawar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-rawar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-rawar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubba* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan *akomama* to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-rawar* building is renewed.

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Plate XXXIX

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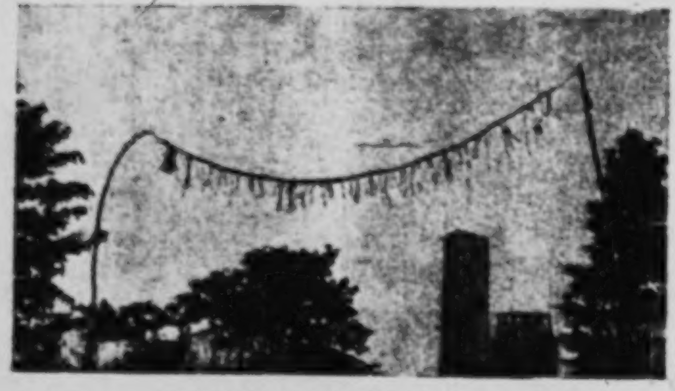
1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse
3 Hobby-horse at the [illegible] wedding
4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Cherpal

[p. 196 (A)]

Plate XL

196



Grain strung across ghotul gate at Ulera

Muria camp, with village flags, during the Dassera festival

[p. 196 (B)]

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

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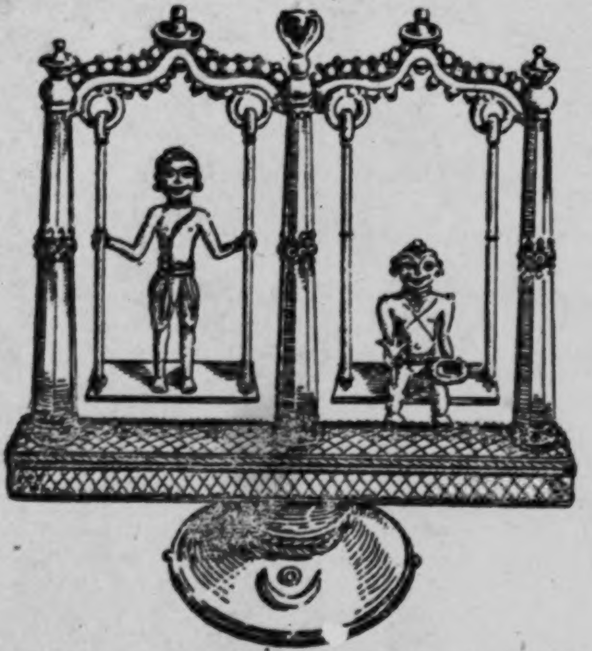


FIG. 25. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. [74] Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

[831] Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Harma who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *hakum* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 196 This description[4] is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given [831] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

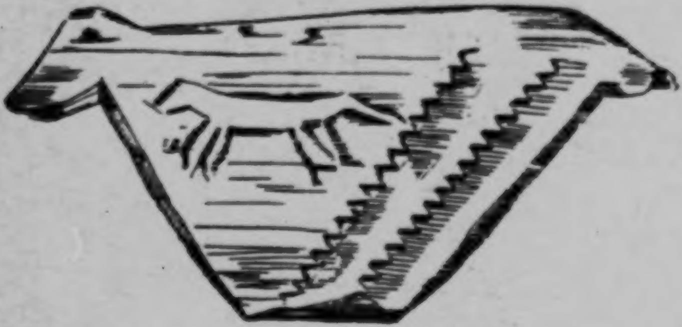
A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiwa* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

{[Description of temple buildings; see pp 196-198, cat. 116—Analyst]

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. 346
And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he



[532]

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9¼"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria 793
is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called [614]
the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very
rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or
appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their
lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were
chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are
invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their
position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they
turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise
a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must
[585] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In
some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern
Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he
787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official
dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State
a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take
his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt
and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it
means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the
inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means
that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot
a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the
late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of
these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in
the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three
days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three
female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise
they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by
that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and
791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival,
in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult
the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a
definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner.
There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible
combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

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[793]

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination. 791 787

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'. 787 825

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when 789

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[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

789 the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

791 In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

751 Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective
754 measures on behalf of man against the natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had
754 seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these
773 there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

> collected in a pool. The girl was afraid to eat the flesh in the presence of her brother but went there secretly and drank the blood. 754
>
> When Mother Earth saw all the offerings that had been made, she 773 was very pleased with that Muria boy and said, 'O boy, whatever you want ask it of me and I will give it to you'. The boy replied, 'I want nothing'. Then the goddess said, 'From today I make you the priest of my shrine. But your sister will be a witch; look at her mouth'. The boy looked and it was red with the blood that she had drunk. From that day, owing to the disobedience of women, there have been witches in the world.

Another story comes from Kanhargaon:

> Lingo married Kodurjunge and lived with her happily, working in his fields. But Tallur Muttai was jealous, for she desired to marry Lingo herself and thought how she could accomplish her desire. One day she took Kodurjunge into the jungle and made her eat a basketful of jamun berries. Then she left her there and went to Lingo saying, 'Your wife is a witch, come and look at her mouth, she is coming home with her mouth reddened with the blood of men. When I saw her I ran away terrified to tell you'. Presently Kodurjunge came home and when Lingo saw her mouth reddened with the jamun juice, he thought, 'Yes, indeed, she must be a witch', and killed her.
>
> Then Tallur Muttai said, 'You cannot live without a wife, marry me'. But Lingo sat with hanging head and would not look at her face. So Tallur Muttai filled with anger went out and cut up Kodurjunge's body. She took it round the village saying that it was pig's flesh. All the pregnant women there at once roasted a little of the flesh and ate it. The others put it in their houses for the morrow's meal. When Lingo discovered what had happened, he went round the village and told them to throw the flesh away. Those who threw it away suffered no harm, but all who had eaten became witches.

The methods of the Muria warlock are not unlike those practised elsewhere 754 in India and indeed throughout the world. The warlock makes a grass doll to represent his enemy and buries it with the head of a chick.[1] This will soon cause his enemy's burial. To injure cattle, he gets the bone of a cow and buries it with a consecrated egg on the threshold of a cow-shed. A more elaborate method is to put the bone, with a hair from the tail, and a little cow's blood, into a small earthen pot and bury it in the path by which the cattle will go to their grazing-ground. The magician ruins a crop in the same way, burying a little rice with appropriate charms in the thrashing-floor. The rice in a pot can be diminished by placing an ear of rice beneath it.

To burn with fire, a warlock picks up a hot coal and a pebble and blows them with a charm towards his enemy, or he burns a grass doll. The antidote to this is to wave hot cow-dung ash three times in the air and hide it under a tree; as the ash cools, so will the victim.

To stop a girl having a child, an enemy—it is usually a woman in this case—steals a little of the haldi from her body as she kisses her on her wedding day. She scratches up some of the mud which the bridegroom throws on the girl at the end of a marriage ceremony and somehow obtains a scrap of her menstrual cloth. She buries these by a river and her victim will be sterile.

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[1] This is the *invultuacio* of the ancient world, the image-magic common in all ages and all places.

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The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dasera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapād*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[787] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

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[1] See pp. 169f.

The Nero of the Tarbahi ghotul

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Plate XLI

Two great friends: Pilmi and his *kosera* at Sidhawand

[p. 204 (A)]

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Bathing the gods at Adner

Plate XLII

Bathing the gods at Masora

[p. 204 (B)]

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 791 787 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 787 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

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[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulenga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jaggu, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Ganda: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulenga took the matter to the police and urged that the Anga should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

791 When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matal (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most 787 complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

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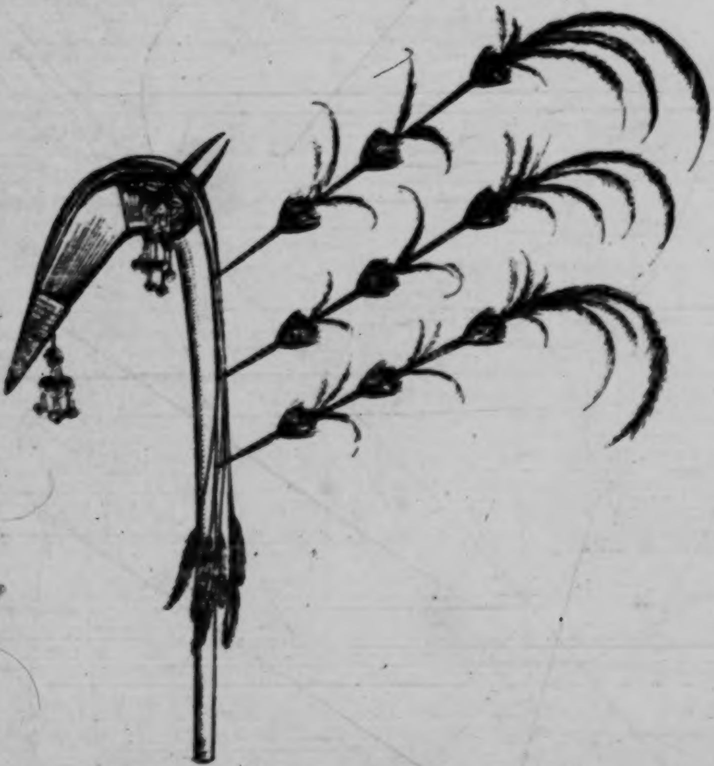

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 5' 4"

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

791 181 considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

825 171 It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

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[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a women's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarhb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XXIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

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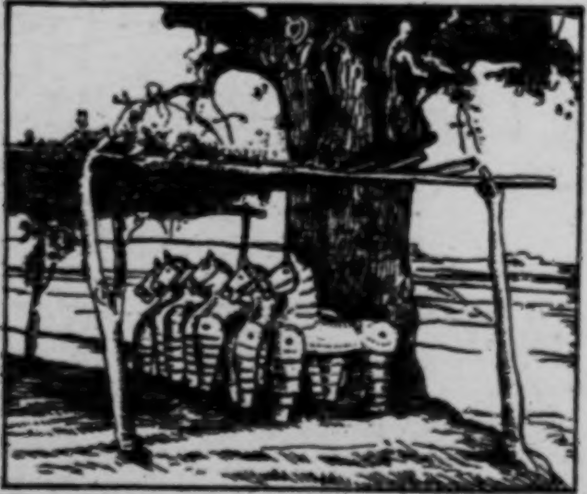
horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor



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After a photograph by G. F. Ramsden

FIG. 28. Gond shrine near Naglir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *asvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Fraser describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

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[1] See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), *passim*; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

Plate XLIII

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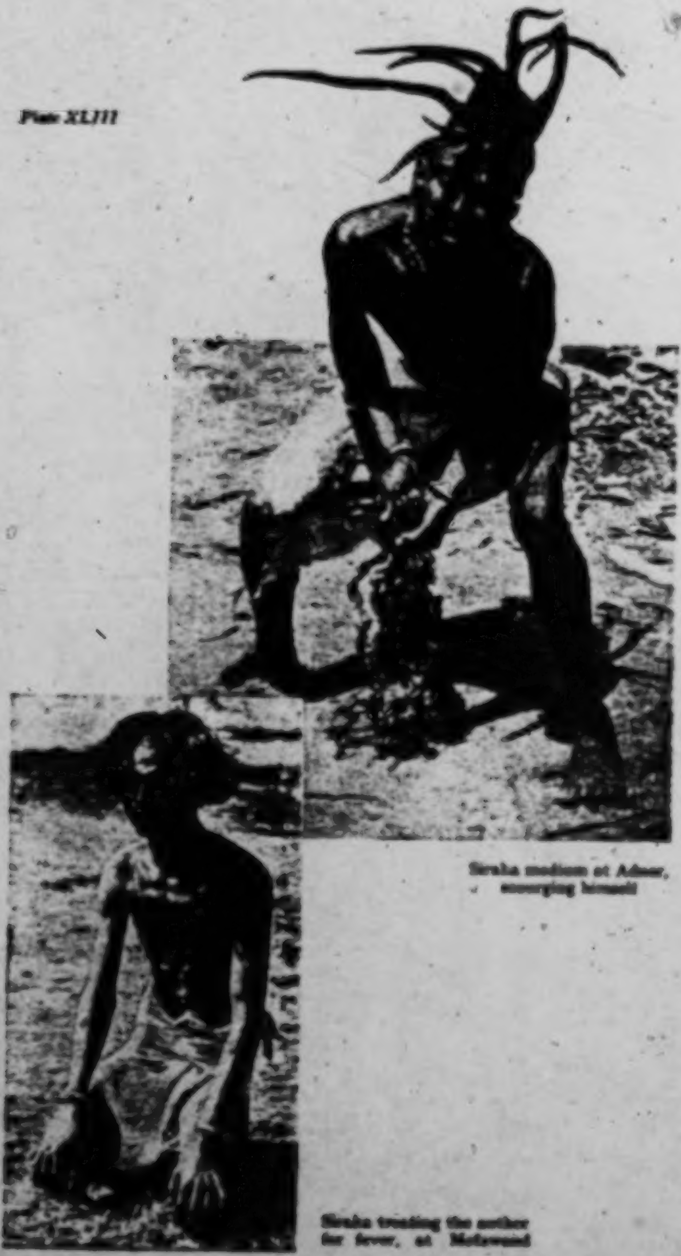

Siraha medium at Adnar, scourging himself

Siraha treating the author for fever, at Metawand

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Plate XLIV

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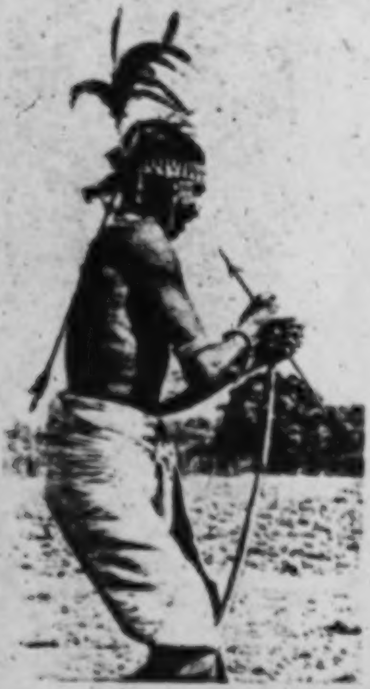
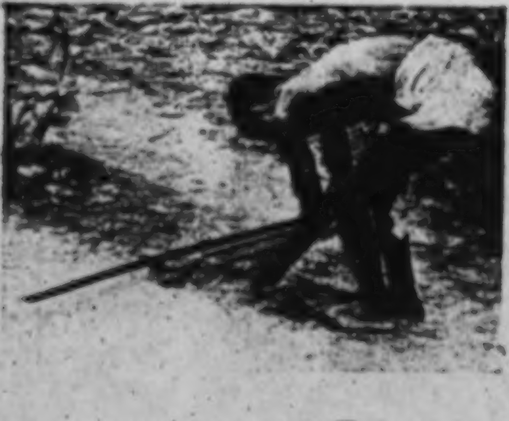


The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Abuer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt



[p.208(B)]

825 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurewala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

171 This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 532 787 791 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite house for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

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[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 182.

[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.

[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 290.

755 Manjhi told me that he knew of an expert Siraha in the neighbourhood, and I determined to try his treatment. I must say that I found it very

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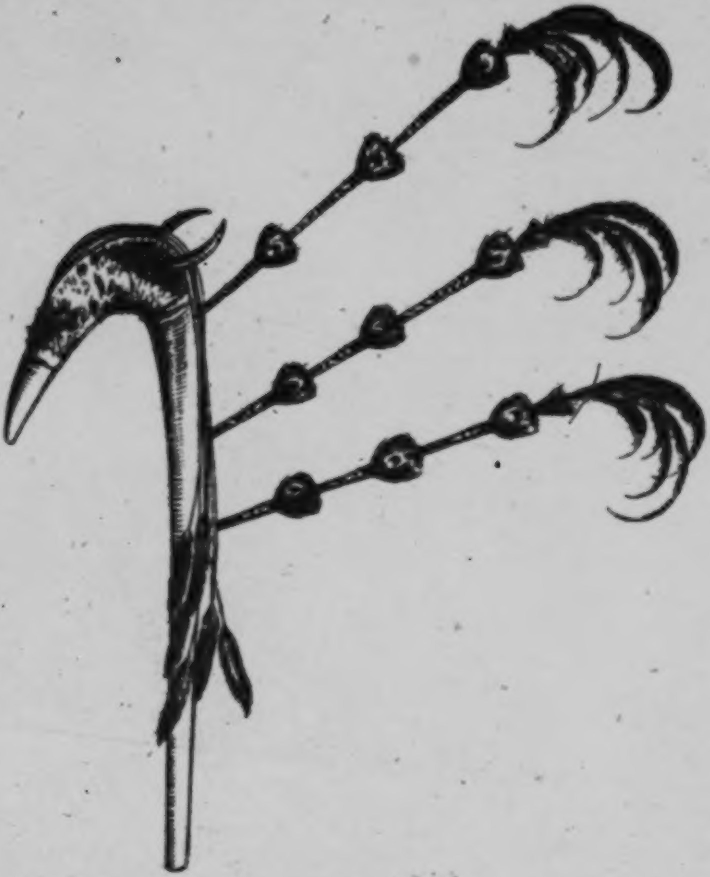

FIG. 29. A wooden 'horse', with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the racket-tailed drongo

Length of wooden section 5' 5"

soothing and comforting. The Siraha paid three visits to my tent. He began with diagnosis, by inducing a state of trance while his assistant, the Manjhi

155 himself, offered incense on a dish of red-hot coals. When the god came on him, the Siraha fell forward with his hands on the fire, then stood up and came directly to my bed and laid his hands on my head. He bent over me

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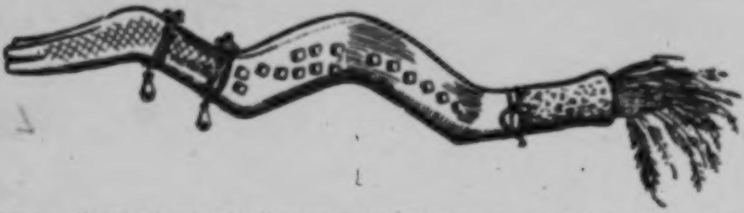

Fig. 30. Wooden horse, attendant on Hanga and Hirme, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikanpal
Length 3'

and blew rice—with which he had filled his mouth—all over my face three times and made passes over my body from head to feet. He clapped his hands and standing upright poured rice on my head.

At the second visit he repeated the process, except that this time he blew twice in my ears. The third time, he again went through the same routine, but brought a garland of flowers which he placed round his neck in the name of the Village Mother. He had previously discovered that the cause of my illness was the Rau of Markabera, where I had just been in camp, so he now brought an egg, a small grass image of myself, and a grass bow-and-arrow on a saja leaf. He waved these over me, and outside the tent offered them to the Rau, picked them up and carried them hastily away into the jungle. As he went he picked a bit of chir grass, broke it and threw it away behind him.

When I recovered, as I did after a few days, I was told that I had been treated in the strictly conventional manner and that no variations had been made for me because I was a stranger. The main points of the treatment are obvious enough—the blowing away of the evil spirit, the lucky rice on the head, the passes down the body to take the illness out into the toes and beyond, the offering of symbols of the patient and carrying them away. Everything was aimed at taking something away from the sick man. At the same time the cause of the disease, in this case a Hill Spirit, had to be amused with the toys and placated by a ceremonial egg.

155 Other methods of diagnosing disease are those common among the aboriginals and even the village Hindus of the Central Provinces—and no doubt elsewhere.
787 I have fully described methods of divination by the measuring-stick and the winnowing-fan in *The Baiga*; the Muria have the same technique.

Divination by rice, by water, and by chickens is, in essence, similar to European table-turning. The Gunia makes a pile of rice in the name of a god. He asks a question and removes a few grains. These he counts—an odd number means yes, an even number no. For each question he has to repeat the process seven times. Another method of augury is to place a small pot of water by the sick man's side. The Gunia makes several piles of rice, one for the sick man, one for witchcraft, one for the gods and so on. He drops a grain from the patient's pile into the water, and then one from the witch's pile. If the witch's grain 'catches' the man's, he declares his disease due to witchcraft. If not, he removes it and tries with a grain from the god's pile. And so on.

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To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Ānga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

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When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thus* is performed.

A *thus* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

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Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means. Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833]
For impotence. The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753]
For dropsy. This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this 757
burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure.

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green 755
shoots of the bahera tree.

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree. 278

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.
(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.
(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.
(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For yaws.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.
(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died; dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. MURIA FESTIVALS

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are com- 527
mercial festivals; in the larger Hinduized villages the old Pen Karsita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

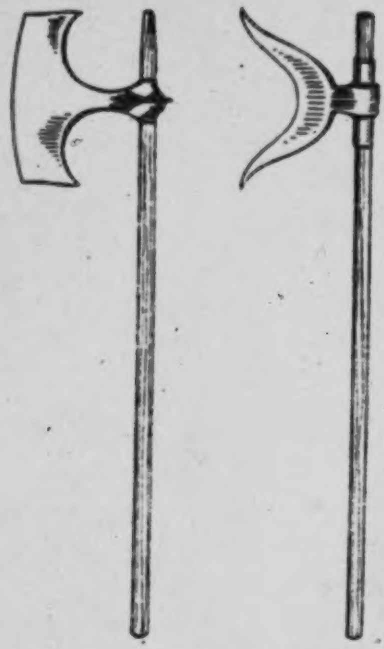

FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

[411] Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder,

MURIA RELIGION

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is 196 mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle.

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife [372] of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back.

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove [778] near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago.

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and koera. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Siraha-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

[411]

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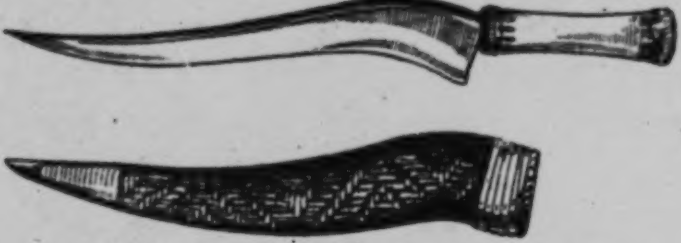

FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with
782 the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

met and ate, and returned home for an all-night dance by the chelik and motiari. 796

During a festival the Muria sing to a large variety of tunes, of which Walter Kaufmann recorded a number of samples: 796

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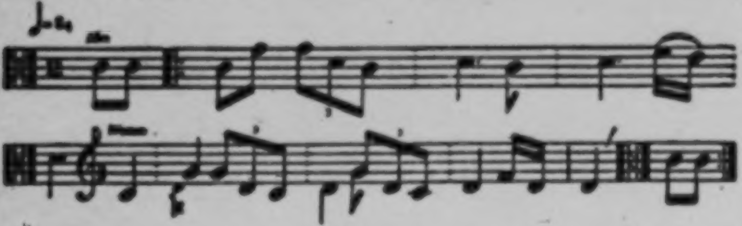

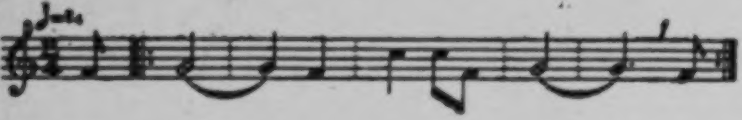

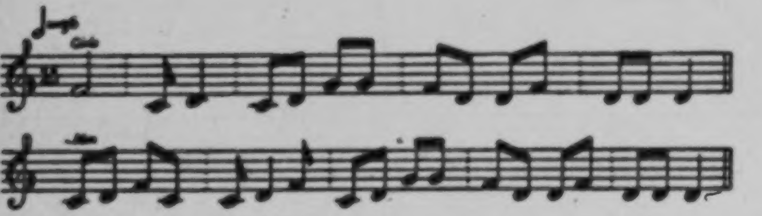

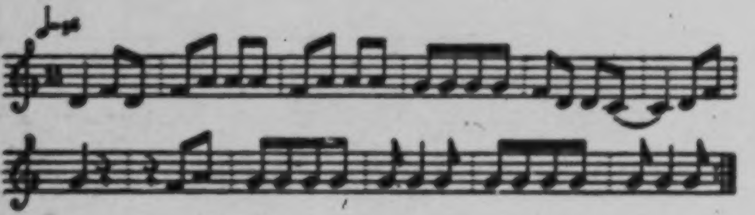

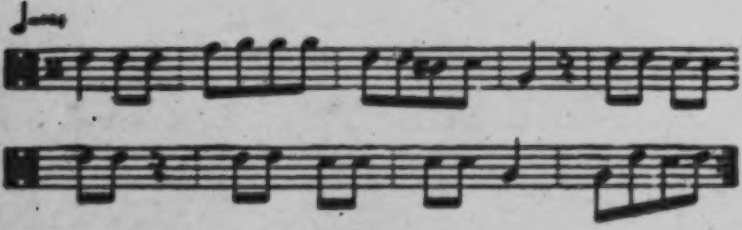

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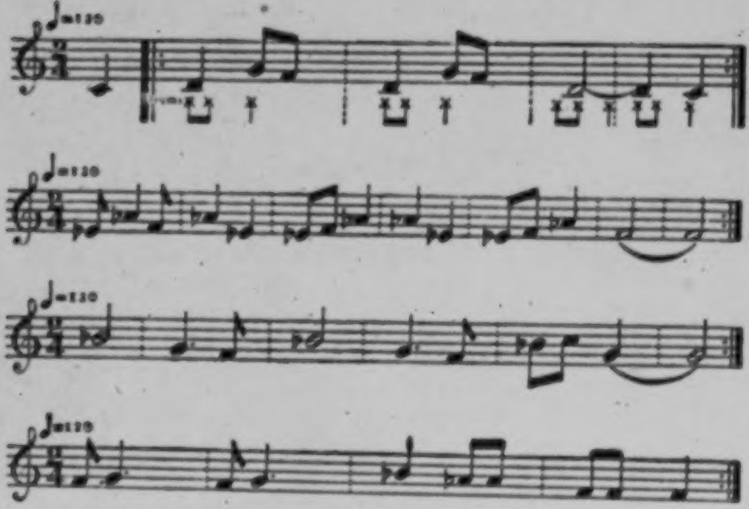

XI. Purifying the Village

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Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bohorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pandum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupul Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1941. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kuari, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, sonra rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

At last the party found a suitable ant-hill, and made seven piles of rice before it, which the Gaita forced the chickens to eat. When their eating had signified that the god had accepted the offering, he killed them. He presented the root representing a pig, two eggs, parched gram and wheat cakes, and buried the gourd full of little demons and the leaves with which they had been caught in the hole of the ant-hill. This isolated and destroyed the evils threatening the village, and closed it with a magic wall against hostile sorcerers. 796 783

Later in the morning a Muria, followed by a Muria-Lohar carrying a basket, went with his hammer and some iron slag round the village. He put three 'nails' in every doorway, and each householder gave him two pice worth of mahua flowers for his services.

Such is the Muria method (which has many points of resemblance to Baiga and Pardhan custom) of closing the magic boundaries of a village, and removing its supernatural dangers.

XII. The Birth of a God

On 31 March 1941 there was a very special occasion at Adnar village. The Pupal Korta Tindana was to be celebrated with the delight and pomp which this festival always excites. But an even more important event was the birth of a young god, so young that he had not yet been even named, but was now to be called Chelik Sai. 796

During the whole of 1940 the people of Adnar had suffered constantly from fever and other diseases. When the Siraha were consulted, the Adnar gods spoke through them saying that a new god had been born and was angry that he was receiving no worship. They were told to go to Bargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana where they would hear from the god Doko Mudial what they must do. The Kaser-Gaita and the people of Adnar therefore went to visit the Kaser-Gaita of Bargaon. He brought Doko Mudial out of his shrine, and the local mediums asked what was to be done. The god replied that a younger brother of his own had been born, the father being Maria Dokara who lives in the Abujhmar, a god of the Kuhrami clan. He said that the people of Adnar must make the god at once and honour him with a *Poroy-tasna* (name-giving) festival. Doko Mudial, who is an Anga, was then carried out into the jungle on the shoulders of two mediums and he showed where the bamboo for making his younger brother was to be cut. The Gaita of Bargaon offered eggs and liquor to the tree and cut it with a single blow of his axe. He handed it over to the Gaita of Adnar, who took it home.

On the morning of the festival day two members of the Naitami clan, which stands in the *akomama* relation to the Kuhrami, took the bamboo into the jungle near the Adnar temples and made the new god. They offered eggs and liquor, spun some cord on a takli, and prepared a large bunch of peacock feathers with a special arrow made of virgin iron. There was also a new knife of virgin iron provided by the Muria-Lohar of Rengagondi. Others erected a pole of saja wood and placed a flat stone before it in front of the new temple—a simple open shed—which had been built for the young god. When all was ready the Kaser-Gaita brought the new god and placed him against the pole in front of his house.

Adnar is a *pen-rawar* of no fewer than three separate clans, the Naitami, Kuhrami and Kawasi. Outside the village, about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the forest is a group of seven temples, each a thatched open shed, with the usual flat stone, cooking apparatus and the god slung high against the roof. Before each temple were poles or frames against which the gods could be rested, and flat stones for sacrifice. In one temple is Visir Mark, son of Kati Dokari, clan-god of the Kuhrami; in another is Udum Kuar, his *akomáma*, clan-god of the Naitami; in a third is Soma Dokara, clan-god of the Kawasi, and *akomáma* to Visir Mark. On this occasion there was a fourth Anga present, the elder brother of the young Chelik Sai, Doko Mudial, who had been brought from Bargaon.

In the other temples were long Gutal poles, each with its bundle of feathers at the top—Kati Dokari (Kuhrami), Samrat Dokara (Naitami), Desh Matra (Naitami), Bhale Dokari (Kawasi). Samrat had his wife with him—Iyadai, represented by a very long pole. Outside the group of temples was a separate shrine for Budhi Matal represented by a closed litter. Such were the gods, and when I arrived on the early morning of 31 March they were being brought out of their temples while chelik gathered with large dhol drums. Visitors came from the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka parganas, but only the Bargaon people brought their gods. A hut of leaves was erected for those visitors who did not belong to the three clans, and from this hut also the husbands of women in their periods and pregnant women could get their food. But I was told that the husbands and mothers of newly delivered babies got nothing at all before the umbilical stump had fallen.

The proceedings opened with some vigorous drumming on the dhol drums, and several mediums fell into their customary trance and asked the gods for permission to begin the festival. When the gods had declared that everything was in order, the Kaser-Gaita of Adnar, a tall lanky man wearing a woman's coloured jacket adorned with cowrie shells, danced round the temples telling every god to get ready.

Then a long procession started for the river. Each god was taken on the shoulders of a member of its own clan and carried through the jungle. As we went, we reached a place where a Rau, or demon of the forest, lived, and rice was offered to him. A little later we came to Bhimul Pen in the shape of a round stone—he was given a brass ring; at the river-bank rice was offered to the Yer Kanyang. Then the priests of every clan offered egg-shells and koera to the gods, and after that they were thrown into the river for a bath. They were thoroughly washed, and most of their worshippers also took the opportunity of a refreshing plunge. After the gods had been carried back dripping and bedraggled, they were anointed with sesamum oil (for this was also the Til Tindana, the first use of the fresh oil).

The rest of the day was occupied with three chief activities. The gods themselves, borne on the shoulders of their mediums, played and danced before their temples. The clan-priests, helped by the chelik, busied themselves in cooking a large feast, in which the new oil and pulses were freely used. Women gathered and the motiari brought piles of leaves and sat in the shade of trees making them into plates and cups. Mediums stood before their deities asking questions and delivering oracles to any who came with private troubles. After the midday meal which the members, both men and women, of each clan ate separately, the usual offerings of chickens and pigs were made to the different gods.

At about four o'clock there was a concentration of mediums round the new god Chelik Sai, and it became known that he had asked for the sacrifice of a young bull (it is only at a funeral that a bullock is used). A party of mediums went for it and it was presently brought in slung to a pole carried by two strong chelik. It was laid before Chelik Sai and blindfolded. Everyone gathered round, the motiari specially pushing to the front. The bull's ribs were touched with the end of the god's Gutal pole. Then with an axe, the clan-priest of the Kuhrami struck the throat of the animal and killed it with a single blow. The Gaita of every god pressed forward with hands outstretched,

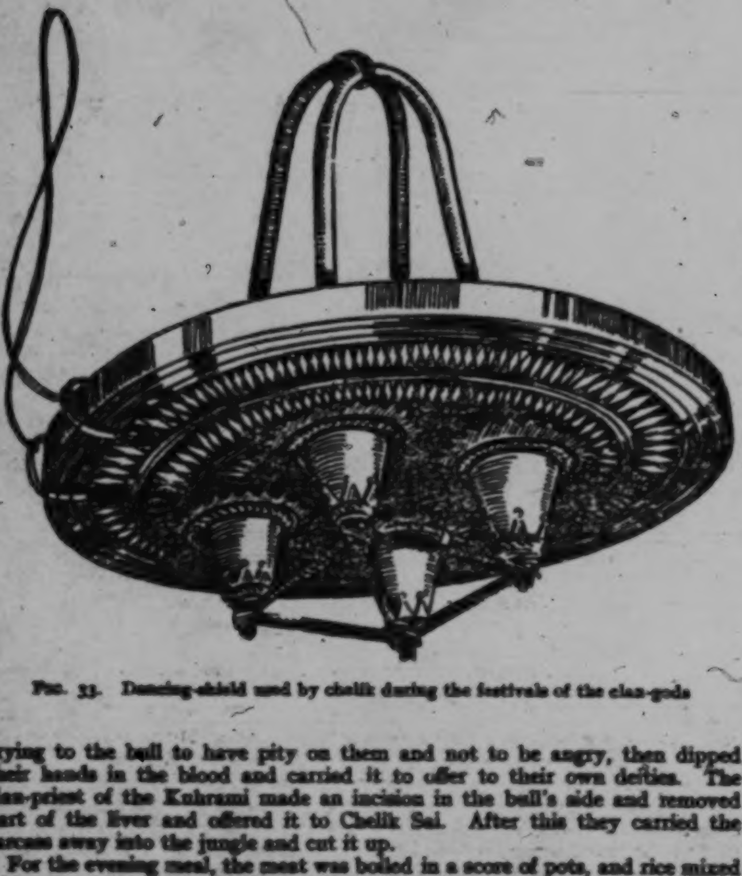

FIG. 33. Dancing-shield used by chelik during the festivals of the clan-gods

crying to the bull to have pity on them and not to be angry, then dipped their hands in the blood and carried it to offer to their own deities. The clan-priest of the Kuhrami made an incision in the bull's side and removed part of the liver and offered it to Chelik Sai. After this they carried the carcass away into the jungle and cut it up.

For the evening meal, the meat was boiled in a score of pots, and rice mixed with sesamum oil, urad pulse and some green vegetables was cooked for each clan separately by the clan-priests in their respective temples.

As evening fell, the chelik and motiari, gorgeous in their festival attire, came from Bargaon and Taragaon, Atargaon and Esalnar, Kajen and Kongera, from Chalka, Temrugaon and Chimri. Each party made a little camp under the trees, lit a fire and cooked some food. About ten o'clock they began to dance, pargana by pargana, in huge circles lit by the light of torches. The gods were brought and placed in the middle of the dancing-field. All night the boys and girls danced and at dawn the gods awoke and danced and postured. About seven o'clock the visitors went away and the gods were taken home. Chelik Sai, who after all is a chelik, danced with the motiari;

796 he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the field. A Siraha-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman should have been there.

XIII. CONCLUSION

771 182 This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Danteshwari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

MURIA RELIGION

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Morals are not usually closely linked with aboriginal theology and ritual. Muria ethics, as we see elsewhere, are fully developed and reach a lofty standard. Part of the system undoubtedly derives from Lingo who during his earthly sojourn is believed to have taught many lessons of domestic fidelity and daily conduct, and whose own life and character is not ignoble. The other gods are less highly moralized, yet their worship probably has a moral influence. For example, when they return home after dancing all night at a festival, are the chelik and motiari better boys and girls? Probably. Their social instincts have been strengthened. Their whole life—gay, colourful, united, peaceful—has appeared more than ever attractive and desirable, and they know that it can only be enjoyed by the practice of certain virtues. They have learnt, in the common dance and common meal, the futility of jealousy, greed and pride.

This fulfilment of the need for moral growth is not, of course, a conscious one; nor is the satisfaction of the sense of beauty in the dancing, music and drum rhythm at festival, marriage and funeral. But it is there and it is most important. The phallic element is not obtruded, but that too is there and its presence reassures the people that this necessary and beautiful aspect of human life is not alien to the divine interest.

A few other points may be noted. I have already stressed the absence of fixed forms and even of a defined pantheon. There is no sacred book, no canon, no deposit of faith committed to a central authorized guardian, no regular liturgy. Religion is always on the move. Even the legends change from village to village. The living voice of the prophet is more important than the convention of the priest. The dream of today is more urgent than the tradition of yesterday. The position and reputation of the gods is constantly changing. As the Muria become more State-conscious, more patriotic and nationalist, as the opening of communications brings them more in touch with the Palace and the Dassera traditions, the worship of Danteshwari is likely to grow ever stronger. By contrast I think the cult of Bara Deo will wane more and more as it has done already in the Central Provinces. Indeed in the neighbouring Bindra Nawagarh Zamindari I have recorded a legend that the decline of Bara Deo was directly due to the British occupation; the old god was captured by the British who still hold him and derive their power from him. As more and more forests are reserved the ancient jungle gods tend to disappear; Kadrengal, lord of the hunt, is already a mere shadow of his former self. There is no need for missionary effort; the advance of civilization will automatically change the character of the gods. I anticipate a considerable increase in the cult of Mahapurub and Bhagavan who are above earthly changes. Modern civilization tends to push men's aspirations and their divinities up into the sky.

The Muria attitude to the gods is a curiously ambivalent blend of familiarity and terror, of humour, affection and abuse. Often they do not so much pray to the gods as talk things over with them, usually at the top of their voices. If they are not satisfied they abuse their gods with point and wit, or treat them very casually in an attempt to bring them to their senses. I was unable to obtain many *mantra*; I believe few exist; the expressions used for the harvest on page 25 and at the time of the hunt on page 42 are definitely intercessory rather than mandatory. The idea that the priest, by virtue of his position or his abstinence, can force the gods to his will, is alien to Muria thought. Yet along with the familiarity and homeliness, there is sometimes a very real sense of awe. In some of the hill temples, when a famous medium is possessed, when the Anga moves so mysteriously to show

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its will, at the crises of the bull-sacrifice, at the dance of the dead, the urgent and catastrophic nature of the unseen is emphasized and the worshippers are hushed into dread and reverence.

Muria religion, then, which anticipates the vast developments of Hinduism, is not unworthy of the great religious system which has grown up on the same soil and out of the same traditions. Of that system it is of course a simple and childlike version, yet it does not lack dignity, power and beauty, and the modern Hindu—if he is wise—will treat it with the reverence that is always due to children's things.

Plate XLV

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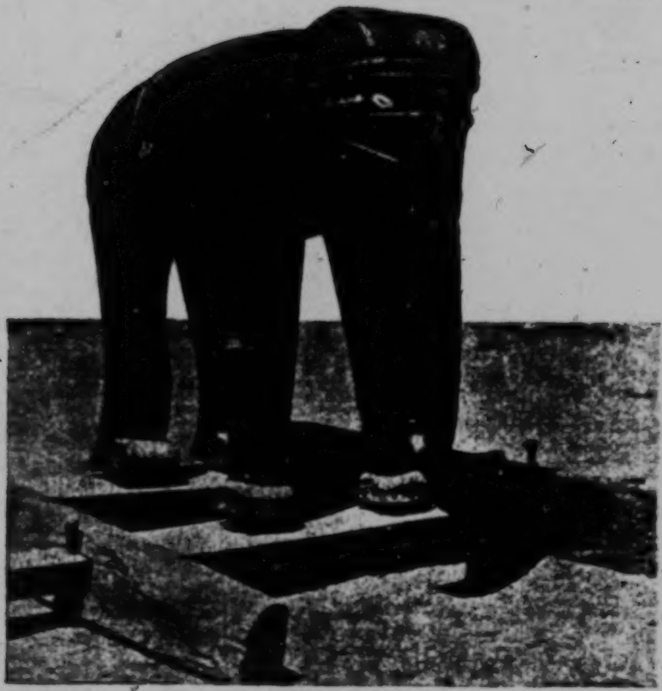

ABOVE: Uraon village elephant of Saparum

BELOW: Uraon dhumkuria at Borbambey

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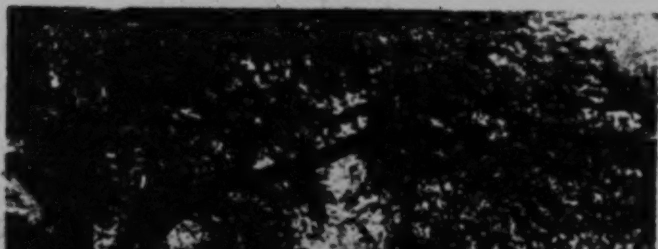

[p. 224 (A)]

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Plate XLVI

Siraha prophesying above
the dedicated bull

[p. 224 (B)]

Category 116 2:Elwin

AW32 Gond
Card 007

Plate XLVII

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The sacrifice

Priests of other deities fill their hands with blood

[p.224(c)]

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Plate XLVIII

The dhangar's 'mistress' at Borhambey

The punishment-pillar at Agru

[p. 224(D)]

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

116 194 118 IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

118 194 In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

194 196 118 Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

113 Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

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[1] There is a shrine to *Lingal Pen* at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Muria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces.* Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 47ff.

113 than the narrator himself. Temple says that the poem was 'for many generations sung by the Pardhan priests to circles of listening Gond'; Russell, more cautiously, simply says that 'Mr Hislop took down from a Pardhan priest a Gond myth'. In some form or other, however, the Lingo story seems to have been widely distributed, for we meet it in Betul, Nagpur and in the south, though probably not in the Eastern States and districts.

There is little literary evidence of the distribution of the legend. P. N. Bose, in an article on 'Chhattisgar: notes on its tribes, sects and castes', says that 'Lingo is held in great veneration in some parts; but elsewhere the very name is unknown'.[1] Dalton says that of the personages mentioned in the Hislop legend 'the Gonds whom I have met with know nothing. I have frequently questioned them on the subject, but they never apparently had heard of Lingo and his feats. Some Murpachi, or four-God Gonds, in Bamra told me they had heard of Lingo, but he belonged to the Western Gonds'.[2] Crooke records that the Patari of Mirzapur who attended the Manjhi and Kharwa as priests and bards, worshipped a god Ningo—who is, of course, the same as Lingo.[3]

From the Dondi-Lohara Zamindari of the Drug District I have recorded a legend that gives to Lingo the same sort of position enjoyed by many other Gond deities. The substitution of crab for human sacrifice is interesting.

> In Dwarka village a Gond prepared a tank. In this tank there grew many lotus flowers. From one of the lotus stalks was born Lingo Pen. He came in a dream to the Gond and said, 'Sacrifice to me your son and I will double the wealth you have'. The Gond agreed and his wealth increased greatly. But when the time came for the sacrifice the Gond broke his promise, and Lingo Pen was so angry that all that Gond's wealth and cattle and his wife and children were destroyed. He himself died and his clan came to an end.
>
> After a time the villagers also left using the tank and gradually it levelled out and appeared as a field. Many people wanted to use the field, but always Lingo Pen would appear before them and drive them away. 'If you will give me a man in sacrifice', he said, 'you may plough my field. Otherwise you must go away.'
>
> Then one day a Gond named Rahpal came from another village and took his plough to the field and began to plough it. As he was doing so, Lingo Pen appeared and said, 'Who are you? Why are you driving a plough into my head?' The Gond fell at his feet and said, 'I am a poor man; spare me'. Lingo Pen said, 'You must give me two-feet worship'. The Gond said, 'You have asked for two feet in worship; I will worship you with ten feet. I will offer it to you on the day the bullocks finish thrashing the grain that grows in this field'. Then said Lingo Pen, 'Very well, when you reap the rice, make twenty small piles of the sheaves and as many piles of sheaves there are so many will be the cartloads of grain that you will get'.
>
> So when the Gond reaped his crop he made twenty piles of sheaves and prepared a thrashing-floor. He invited his caste-fellows and made ready the sacrifice to Lingo Pen. He caught a crab in the stream and brought it to the thrashing-floor and called on Lingo Pen with fire and incense. The god came and said, 'What is this?' 'You asked for two feet in sacrifice and I promised you ten. Here is the ten-feet

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[1] *JASB*, Vol. LIX (1890), Pt. 1 (No. 3), p. 281.

[2] Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

[3] *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1891), p. 66

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creature.' When Lingo Pen saw the crab he was pleased and no longer asked for men. Now we always give Lingo Pen a crab whatever else we may also be offering him.

In the Oundhi tract of the same district, so Miss D. Bhagwat informs me, Hulki songs are addressed to Lingo and he is described as the patron of dance and music, as in Bastar.

Johar johar O Lingo!
The *minda*-lyre gives out its tune;
Kadur hum it says.
On his waist Lingo wears brass bells;
There are anklets on his feet;
At his lips there is a flute;
From his ears too there burst
Notes of music:
They come from every side.[1]

In the Bindra-Nawagarh Zamindari, however, the Gond seem to identify Lingo with Bhimsen or Bhimul. Here he is a Rain God. The Gond make a shrine of four pillars round a stone, and when the rain fails they take it as a sign that Lingo is displeased and go to the place dancing and singing.

I am informed by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf that among the Gond of Adilabad District (Hyderabad) the hero Pahindi Kupar Lingal[2] figures mainly as the liberator of the Gond gods. He divides the Gond into clans and establishes their great god, the Persa Pen. But the tale of his 'temptation' does not seem to be known. He is, however, a patron of music as elsewhere. He used to play eighteen tunes on his guitar: it is the beauty of his playing that awakes the imprisoned Gond gods and revives them with new life and hope. Later he saves his own life by his art, and introduces music and dancing to the world.[3]

In Rewa State, about twelve miles from Amarkantak, on the banks of the Narbada, is a beautiful mountain named Lingo, from whose forest-covered slopes comes at times the sound of ghostly music. The story current among the Pardhan and Gond of this region is that the mountain is named after Rai Linga, son of the Raja of Deogarh, founder of the Dhurwa clan.

> Once Bhimsen went to Amarkantak, carrying a load of roots, which hung from his pole in two fish-baskets. One was a *mohra* and the other a *dhuti*-basket. On the way, the pole broke and the two baskets of roots fell down and turned into hills, which were then called Mohra Dongar and Dhuti Dongar.
>
> About this time, Rai Linga, who had quarrelled with his brothers in Deogarh, camped at Mohra Dongar with his soldiers. He liked the place so much that he decided to build his palace there, and from that time the hill was known as Rai Linga Dongar. A short while afterwards Bara Deo also came to live with Rai Linga.
>
> One day the Pujari of the Khajarwariha Dhurwa clan set out with the other villagers to Rai Linga Dongar to mingle their dead with Bara Deo. They made offerings of rice, chickens and goats, and danced to

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[1] Private communication from Miss D. Bhagwat.

[2] *Pahindi* is the name of a shrub with a red flower: *kupar* is 'the hair-knot worn on one side of the head': the name may mean 'the flower-born Lingal with his hair-knot to the side'.

[3] Private communication from C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

> the beating of the drums. As they were returning home, the Pujari suddenly remembered that he had left behind his sacrificial knife. He turned back and as he entered the shrine saw all the gods partaking of the offerings they had made. The gods were angry that a human being had seen them feasting and decided that the Pujari should not return to his village lest he should tell others what he had seen. Hardly had the Pujari gone inside the shrine than the door shut behind him and he was unable to get out. At the same moment, the villagers who were still on their way home turned into stone with their horses and possessions and these can be seen to this day. The shrine in which the Pujari was shut also turned into stone with the passing of years. After this disaster, the villagers no longer made sacrifices on the top of the hill.
>
> Half-way up the hill can be seen two spears and a few cow-bells. These belong to Rai Linga and the villagers make offerings to them in time of sickness. To this day, the approach of disease or danger is heralded by gunfire from the top of the hill, which can be distinctly heard.
>
> In Huddatola there is a sacred bathing-place known as Deodhar. In former days the Pujari bathed here and dived underground to find a siari plant growing there. He used to pluck some leaves and offer them to Bara Deo. The Pujari was able to do this then because the god possessed him, but today although people bathe on the very spot, they cannot reach the siari plant, for they are not helped by the god.
>
> Once a man was relieving himself close to the Deodhar. Annoyed at this, Rai Linga threw a spear at him but it missed and struck a flat stone. Some people from Ramnagar took this spear to their village, but on the way they died. The mark on the rock made by Rai Linga's spear can be seen to this day.

Another Mandla story connects Lingo with Lanjhi, a traditional home of the Muria.

> Lingo Deo was born in Lanjhi Garh. There was a Dhurwa Raja. He was very poor. One day Lingo Deo gave him a dream, 'I am going to take birth in a bamboo clump. You worship me and I will make you wealthy'. The Raja woke up and went to find the bamboo clump. There he found Lingo with his head protruding out of the bamboo and he offered him food-sacrifice. The Raja took Lingo Deo home with him and the god stayed with him. After this the Raja grew wealthier every day.
>
> Then one day said Lingo Deo, 'Come with me and I will take you on tour and then bring you home again'. As they went they came to Lingo Hill in Rewa State and there they made a palace for the god. Lingo had a son who had married someone in Surguja. Lingo had invited all the gods except Kukra Pat. The marriage party went on its way. Lingo Deo made ten days and nights as if they were a single night. 'In one night it must all be done and no one should know of it.'
>
> As the marriage party was returning home, Kukra Pat heard of it and felt annoyed that all the gods had been invited and only he had been left out. When the marriage party reached Lingo Hill, Kukra Pat called 'Kukra-koo, kukra-koo'. When they heard that noise, some of the gods turned into stone, some into wood, some into earth; their drums and horses also turned into stone and wood and earth. Some

of the gods had gone into the palace, and had taken the Raja's battle-axe with them. Dhurwa Raja went in to get his axe and the doors shut upon him, and he never got out again.

The Khuttia Kond (I am henceforth going to spell Kond instead of Khond, Khand, Kandh or Kondh) of Orissa, who are not after all very distant geographically from the Muria, have a deity Linga Pinnu, who founded their tribe and gave them their chief institutions including the village dormitory. At Sunabata, I recorded a song, much of which might have been chanted in Bastar.

We will sing a song of Linga Pinnu.
Linga Pinnu made the world,
Linga Pinnu made the people,
Linga Pinnu made the Kui,
Linga Pinnu made the Pano,
Linga Pinnu made the sahibs,
Linga Pinnu made the sambhar,
Linga Pinnu made the barking-deer,
Linga Pinnu made the cows,
Linga Pinnu made the roots,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *tapha* [small drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *lisna* [big drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to blow the *mohori*,
Linga Pinnu taught us to cut *guriya* on the hillside,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to plant roots and pulses.
Linga Pinnu taught the unmarried boys to sleep in the *dhangra-ilu*,
Linga Pinnu taught them how to dance and sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to do the Meriah sacrifice.
Linga Pinnu was born from the ground
From the ground between Gumma and Karanja;
He lived till he was old.
He taught us everything and died.
When he married he had children:
We are all his offspring.
Linga Pinnu divided us by castes and clans.
Then we Kui said to one another,
'How shall we eat? How shall we live?'
Linga Pinnu took us to the jungle;
He taught us how to cut and burn.
For our crops he gave us seed.

We must not, of course, be taken in by names. Since Lingo or Linga simply means the phallus and might thus be given as a name to any deity of the Shaivite type, its use does not necessarily imply a connexion with the Muria Lingo. But legends to the north, in the Central Provinces, are probably of the same family.

III. Hislop's Version of the Legend

Unfortunately Hislop's version was considerably bowdlerized by Sir Richard Temple, assisted by the Reverend Baba Pandurang 'of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, who was Mr Hislop's native assistant, and his companion in several tours, and who frequently was employed by Mr Hislop in obtaining information'.[1] All such passages as were 'redundant, frivolous, improper or objectionable' were cut out and 'the original whole thus pared down to about one half'.[2] But Temple's translation is delightful and to read it is to obtain a fairly good picture of the Gond as seen through the superior eyes of a Hinduized Pardhan who was well acquainted with the advanced culture of the capital of the province. It would be truer to say that it was a Hindu myth about the Gond, or perhaps even a Hindu missionary tract aiming at spreading the Shaivite faith, rather than a genuine element of Gond mythology.

The Lingo of the legend, as Temple admits, is not a Gond, but 'appears throughout in the character of a devout Hindu'.[3] He wears a dhoti round the loins down to the heels (but the Gond has it tied above the knees), he keeps a knot of hair on his head, a diamond on the navel, and on his forehead a sacred mark. Although in front 'he looks foppish like a young man, from behind he looks like a devout Brahmin'.[4] He conquers the gods by fasting and penance. His practice of celibacy is typically Brahmin.

Hislop's legend contains many other Hindu features. Russell points out that the 'Hindu who clearly composed Mr Hislop's version wished to introduce the god Siva as a principal actor' and he therefore removed the site of the cave in which the Gond were imprisoned to the Himalayas. The scornful references to the bad smell and omnivorous habits of the Gond are typical of the Hindu attitude to the aboriginals even today. Many small points—the preference of sons to daughters (not characteristic of the Gond), the introduction of Hindu demons like Basmasur and a version of the bird Garuda, the worship of Hanuman at the end of a wedding—indicate the Hindu standpoint of the author.

At the same time, even Hislop's story contains many very primitive elements, and the main outline of the life of Lingo appears to be of genuinely Gond origin. Dalton goes too far in saying that the legend 'cannot be regarded as embodying any true Gondi traditional lore'.[5] After an account of the creation, the epic describes how from the womb of Parvati eighteen thrashing-floors of Brahmin gods and twelve thrashing-floors of Gond gods were born. The Gond were 'disorderly behaved' and a 'smell was spread over the jungle'. Mahadeo, in order to get rid of them, called them to a meeting. He made a squirrel and let it loose in their midst. They chased it, and the squirrel led them on into a large cave in which Mahadeo shut them up. Only four escaped; they fled to Kachikopa Lohogarh, or the Iron Cave in the Red Hill, and lived there. But Parvati desired the restoration of her Gond, and fasted for six months until Bhagavan promised that they should be given back, and caused Lingo to be born for that purpose.[6]

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[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part III, p. 1. [2] ibid., p. 8. [3] ibid., p. 22.
[4] ibid., p. 23. [5] Dalton, op. cit., p. 282.
[6] On the liberation of the Gond from the cave wherein they were imprisoned, there is a curious note in *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 106: 'According to the Gond legend, Lingo was the leader who liberated the first men of the nation from a cave in Kachi Kopa Lohagad or "The Iron Valley in the Red Hill". The exact position of the valley is not stated, but it would seem to have been somewhere in the Himalaya Mountains as Mount Devalagiri is mentioned. Mahadeva is said to have closed the mouth of the cave with a large stone 16 cubits high. Lingo removed the stone and "sixteen crores of Gonds" came out of the cave. No meaning seems to be attached to the name Lingo, but in Gondi *longya* means "a wolf" and in Mahratti *longa* (in which case the story may be totemistic). This is a similar legend to that of the Mughals whose ancestors were confined in the iron-bound valley of Irgucne Kon, from whence they were delivered by Burtechino or the "Dun wolf". According to Abulghazi Khan, the ancestors of the Turks were liberated from the iron-bound valley of Irgana Kon by Bertezena. Every year the Khan of the Turks went to sacrifice in the cave of his ancestors at Mount [illegible] Kun. Speaking of

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

There was a tree;
It was blossoming. Then said Bhagavan, ,One of its flowers shall conceive.
By God's doing, clouds and winds were loosed. A cloud like a fan arose: thunder roared and lightning flashed;
The flower burst, clouds opened and darkness fell; the day was hid...
In the morning, when clouds resounded with thunder, the flower opened
And burst, and Lingo was born, and he sprang and fell into a heap of turmeric.
Then the clouds cleared, and at the dawn Lingo began to cry...
It was noon, and wind blew, when Lingo began to grow.

He quickly grew up; 'he was a perfect man: water may be stained, but he had no stain whatever'. But he was lonely. He climbed a needle-like hill and from afar he saw the four Gond on the Red Hill. He met them and became their little brother. He asked them to get him an animal without a liver. They went for a long hunt, but could not find what they wanted. Lingo then taught his brothers to cut down trees and make a field. Their hands quickly blistered and they threw down their hatchets. But in an hour Lingo made a large clearing. The black soil appeared and he sowed rice and fenced it.

There follows a beautiful account of the rains, the growing of the rice and the coming of a herd of nilgai deer to eat it. Lingo and his brothers hunt the deer and kill all save one old bull and a little doe. When they want to cook the meat, the brothers try to make fire with their flints, but fail; Lingo then has an encounter with the giant named Rikad Gawadi, in whose field fire is found. Lingo makes a guitar to charm the giant:

He saw in front three gourds.
Then he saw a bamboo stick, which he took up.
When the river was flooded,
It washed away a gourd tree, and its seed fell, and each stem produced bottle gourds.
He inserted a bamboo stick in the hollow of the gourd and made a guitar.
He plucked two hairs from his head, and strung it.
He held a bow, and fixed eleven keys to that one stick and played on it.

It is interesting to find that in Nagpur, as in Bastar today, Lingo was regarded as a great musician. He played so beautifully that the giant and his wife began to dance.

Lingo took the guitar in his hand,
And held it; he gave a stroke, and it sounded well; from it he drew one hundred tunes.
It sounded well, as if he was singing with his voice.
Trees and hills were silent at its sound.

The old giant hears the music and says, 'Whence has a creature come here today to sing like the maina bird?' And he begins to dance.

the ancient Getae, Strabo remarks that Zamolxis whom they revered as a god, "retired into a district of caverns". The mountain is held sacred and is thus distinguished, being named Kogaionon.—*Archaeological Reports*, Vol. IX, p. 158, quoting De Herbelot: *Bibliotheque Orientale*, Vol. VI, p. 152; Gibbon, chapter 42; Prichard, *Physical History of Mankind*, Vol. IV, p. 337.'

Sometimes sitting and sometimes standing, jumping and rolling he began to dance.
The music sounded as the day dawned. His old woman came out in the morning, and began to look out.
The old woman called her husband to her.
With stretched hands and lifted feet, and with his neck bent down, he danced.
Thus he danced. The old woman looked towards her husband, and said, My old man, my husband,
Surely that music is very melodious. I will dance, said the old woman.
Having made the fold of her dress loose, she quickly began to dance near the hedge.
Lingo said in his mind, I am a devout Lingo; God's servant am I...
Water may possess a stain, but I have none. I am Lingo. I will make the old man and woman
To dance the Gond dance.

He calls on a number of Gond gods, and makes friends with the giant. He invites him to a great feast of venison. The giant offers his seven daughters to Lingo in marriage. Lingo declares that he himself will not marry, and gives the girls to his brothers, two apiece to the three elder and one to the fourth. At first they are suspicious, knowing that Lingo, as the youngest brother, will have access to all the girls. But Lingo says—in a passage which, as I will show later, is of the greatest importance to an understanding of the poem—

If you marry them they will serve me.
They will be my sisters-in-law. You are older, and I am younger.
They can give me water and bread, and spread a bed for me;
I will sleep on it. They can give me a bath; my clothes they will wash.
They will be my sisters-in-law, and like my mothers they shall be.
So said Lingo. When Lingo said they will be my mothers, the suspicion of the four vanished.

The marriage is celebrated in the house of the bridegrooms—a characteristic Gond touch. After the marriage, the elder brothers go out to get meat and fruit, saying that Lingo should sit in a swing and be entertained by the seven wives. 'He thought of our good, not of his own, so we will reckon him as our father.' But after the brothers have gone to the forest,

The seven sisters said within themselves, Hear O sisters. This Lingo
Is our husband's younger brother, and we are his sisters-in-law; we are at liberty to laugh with him;
We can pull him by the hand, and we can make him to speak with us.
Lingo does not laugh with us; he neither speaks nor looks towards us; he has closed his eyes;
But he shall laugh, and we will play with him. So saying,
Some held his hand, and some his feet and pulled him, but Lingo moved not his eyes;
He did not speak or laugh with them.
Then Lingo said to them, Hear, O sisters. You have held my hands
And feet, and pulled them; but remember you are my sisters.
You are my mothers; why do you deal so with me? I am God's servant.
I don't care though my life be sacrificed, but I will not speak with you, nor look at you, nor laugh with you. So said Lingo.

In spite of these protests, however, the sisters persist in their attempts at seduction, until Lingo beats them soundly with a rice-pestle. They flee before him, 'like bellowing cows'. Lingo goes back to sleep. The women lie down in their houses. When the brothers return, the women accuse Lingo of having shamed them. The brothers are very angry and say,

> We told Lingo at the first
> That there were seven sisters, and that he might choose one from amongst them,
> And that we would marry the rest. But he said,
> They are my sisters, they are my mothers.
> Thus said that sinner, wicked and ill-conducted, that Lingo.

The brothers then decide to kill Lingo. They entice him into the forest with the story of a great animal which had put them to flight and which only he could slay, and there they kill him. They pluck out his eyes.

> One said, Let us play at marbles.
> They took out both the eyes, and said, O seven sisters! You also join in play.
> They brought the eyes, and placed one on the east side, and the other on the west;
> And the brethren, sitting close, held the marbles between the joints of their fingers.
> They began to play at marbles with the two eyes; and their game lasted an hour.

But this is not the end. Bhagavan sends the bird Kagesur to find Lingo's body and Kurtao Sabal sprinkles nectar upon it and restores him to life. Lingo then sets out to find the imprisoned Gond; he endures penance for twelve months till the golden seat of Mahadeo begins to shake. Mahadeo agrees to release the Gond, but Narayan interposes with a typical folk-tale test; Lingo must bring him the young of the black Bindo bird. Lingo performs this task successfully and on his return releases the Gond, divides them into clans and teaches them the ritual of marriage.

Such is, in brief outline, the earliest recorded version of this great legend. A little after the publication of the Hislop papers, the otherwise entirely admirable Captain Forsyth was mistaken enough to turn it into the metre of *Hiawatha*.[1] From this version we must be content to glean a few rich ears of poetry:

> And our Lingo redivivus
> Wandered on until the night fell.
> Screamed the panther in the forest,
> Growled the bear upon the mountain,
> And our Lingo then bethought him
> Of their cannibal propensities. . . .
>
> His bulldog fierce Basmasur. . . .

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[1] J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871), pp. 182ff. Forsyth finds that 'the programme' of the 'Hindu saint Lingo' bears a 'singular resemblance in many respects to the legend of Hiawatha, the prophet of the Red Indians'. But, he adds, 'the noble savage of North America is a very different character from the poor squalid Gond of Central India; and not even the genius of a Longfellow or a Fenimore Cooper could throw a halo of sentiment over the latter and his surroundings'.

Mahadeo
Came and saw that bed of prickles
Where our Lingo lay unmoving,
Asked him what the little game was.

Russell, who quotes from both Hislop and Forsyth, says that 'certain variations from another form of the legend obtained in Bastar are included'[1] in his pages. But there is no indication of this, and indeed the only part of Russell's account which is not obviously derived from Hislop or Forsyth is a short passage on page 61 of his third volume 'taken from a slightly different local version'[2] which describes the universally-known story of the crossing of a river, whereby tortoise and crocodile totems are derived, and a brief reference to Lingo dividing the Gond into clans and teaching them about marriage.

IV. The Betul Version

We must now turn to a comparatively modern version of the Lingo story, recorded by C. G. C. Trench in Betul.[3] There is, again, no indication where the story was recorded or from whom, though special reference is made to Tahaldas, petition-writer of Betul, and Parsial Kotwar of Lapajhiri, the writer's two munshis. Petition-writers are, of course, famous throughout India as authors of fiction. Trench's version is undoubtedly a more authentic Gond product than Hislop's and is nearer to the Bastar legend, though it too has many Hindu elements. The picture of Rai Linga in heaven and his incarnation is typically Hindu. A Raja goes to the Ganges to bathe. Rai Linga's brothers go to hunt in the forest of Bindraban, and catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna. The death ceremony is Hindu, so is the custom of building an elaborate tomb. At the end of the story Rai Linga ascends to heaven like Tukaram or any other Hindu saint. Moreover, as I shall show later, the character of Rai Linga is as typically Brahmanical as Hislop's Lingo.

Trench's story opens in heaven. Rai Linga descends and enters into Talko the queen. In due time he bursts out from the crown of her head. Unfortunately, the king who had gone to the Ganges 'with his pots and pans to bale out pools of fish' is drowned that very day and the queen, regarding Rai Linga as a curse, sends two maidens to bury him in the forest. But they take pity on him, and leave him under a banyan tree. Thence he is carried off by Rani Gidal, queen of the vultures, who drops him into the lap of Queen Barren, consort of King Sterile. The boy soon grows up and, like the hero of many other Gond folk-tales, takes a bow and arrow and wanders away to the palace of his real mother. Queen Talko accepts the boy as her own and makes him her 'throne-seated king' above the heads of her six elder sons.

The elder brothers are naturally annoyed at this and they take the young king out to catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna, where they try to kill him. But Rai Linga escapes and follows his brothers home. Then the brothers go out on a six months' trading venture taking five or fifty bullocks loaded with pearls and jewels. They say to the boy, 'You look after your six sisters-in-law well. Let them not joke or talk with anyone. We are going to trade'. Rai Linga was a lad of twelve years. 'He spoke not a word to his sisters-in-law, nor did he joke with them. He would play and talk with the village

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[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 49.
[2] Ibid., p. 61.
[3] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 10ff.

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maidens.' The six wives used to look out from their fort and say, 'See, girls, how he jests and talks with the village maidens, but not a word to us!' When the boy came home, they used to feed him and spread his bed. But he took no notice of them and at dawn he would return to play with the village maidens. At last the six sisters decided that each of them should spend one night with the boy. 'The first night, the eldest forced him to lie down with her, but Rai Linga went to sleep and slept all night through. He never moved, or touched, or laid a finger on her. . . . He never spoke a single wicked word with the village maidens also.' Each sister tried in turn to seduce the boy, but to no avail; then they took him to kill green parrots in the forest, and there stripped him naked, but he did nothing. 'Rai Linga put on his dhoti and went to the village and began to play with the village maidens.'

At last, in despair, the six sisters shut themselves up with a tame cat and the cat in a rage scratched and bit them. When the brothers returned home they found their wives down with fever and accusing Rai Linga of having dishonoured them. 'Rai Linga was playing with the village girls, but they seized him and brought him from there, and put him into an iron grain-bin, and outside the village prepared a great furnace of wood, and brought the iron grain-bin to the furnace, and put it inside it, and set fire to the furnace. Rai Linga was burnt to death.'

Three days later, the elder brothers decide to take 'this stud-bull' from the fire and perform his funeral rites. But when they go to remove him, Rai Linga is alive. He says, 'If I had committed a sin, I should have been burnt. I committed no sin'. Hearing this, the brothers repent and say, 'Rai Linga is innocent. The guilty ones are the women'. They bring Rai Linga with great honour, but they tie bars to the women's legs, yoke bullocks to them, and drive them round the village till they die. For this Rai Linga reproves them, and for a time they all live without wives.

We then get an echo of Hislop's story: Rai Linga goes to the forest and kills many stags, but there is no fire to cook the feast. He sets out to find fire, and obtains it from an old woman who has seven daughters. The girls go with him to the place where the stags had fallen, and they cook and eat their fill. Rai Linga tells the girls to take away the meat that is left, but they protest that they are unable to carry it. So he sends a brother with each girl to help her. By a trick he brings the girls to his own house and there he marries them to his brothers. One girl is left and the brothers say, 'Won't you marry her?' But Rai Linga says, 'Let her go where her vocation calls her (*bega tana sansar*[1] *lagai agga dal*). I am a holy saint. I may not stay'. So he embraced them all, and vanished, and departed to his own Agasdip, and his six brothers reigned as kings in Singardip.

In both the Nagpur and Betul versions there are many parallels to the Bastar story which also has various (but fewer) Hindu elements. Everywhere the climax of the story is the conflict between the elder brothers and the younger. Everywhere Lingo is represented as the founder of the Gond tribe and giving it characteristic institutions. The other legends make no mention of the ghotul which is so prominent in the Bastar version, but it is noticeable that in the Nagpur story Lingo is a great musician, and in the Betul story Rai Linga is always playing with the village maidens; since he is only a lad of twelve years he sounds very like a chelik playing with the motiari. They are not, however, described as motiari, but as *naiona raiyang*.

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[1] *Sansar*, a Hindu expression.

V. INTERPRETATIONS

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Unfortunately both versions of the legend have been romanticized in a manner hardly true to the facts. Bishop Eyre Chatterton says that 'there is a deeper side to the story of Lingo, which no one interested in "things of the soul" can fail to appreciate. The story invites the Gonds to think that they owed their simple civilization to a being of a higher order than themselves. . . The story, too, claims for the "emancipator" a wonderfully noble character. "Lingo was a perfect man, water may be stained, but no stain had Lingo."[1] His rejection of temptation, his freedom from malice and guile, his readiness to forgive his murderers, to forget their ingratitude and injuries, and to complete his mission of the rescue of the Gond race, remind one strangely of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.'[2] Forsyth, more properly, compares Lingo to Hiawatha, though he too suggests that 'to some an even more startling parallelism may suggest itself'.[3] Trench claims that 'the Rai Linga legend presents astonishing parallels to the Gospel narrative. Rai Linga may not inappropriately be styled the Gond Redeemer. The legend records his incarnation, his purity of heart, his temptation, his death at the hand of unjust accusers, his resurrection after three days, his discovery of fire, and his final ascension into heaven. In Dr Hislop's version there is also a close parallel to the descent into Hades, for Rai Linga is represented as releasing the Gonds from an underground cavern, where they had been confined by Mahadeo for their misdeeds on earth'.[4]

This is sheer nonsense. It is false, not only in sentiment but in fact. It is a vivid example of the danger of relying on apparent parallels between wholly different cultures, without reference to their social background. The incarnation of Lingo is a Hindu conception as is the manner of his miraculous birth in Hislop's story. Far nearer to Gond ideas is the Bastar story of the birth of the honest peasant Lingo in a poor cottage, or even that other version which says that he was born from a stone.

The death of Lingo presents no parallel to the Crucifixion. His incarceration in the iron grain-bin was, as the Bastar story clearly shows, an ordeal of the type familiar to all students of folk-tales, in which the hero must pass a chastity test by holding red-hot metal or plunging himself into boiling oil.[5]

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[1] The expression 'Lingo was a perfect man' with its Dominical reference is not in the original. The Gondi is *Her Lingal yetum dag malke lingundag halle*, 'Lingo (was such) that to water there might be a stain, but to Lingo there was no stain'. He is, however, called *satadhar* (saint), *penpariyar* (god's servant), *bhdn* (devotee).

[2] Eyre Chatterton, op. cit., p. 223.

[3] Forsyth, op. cit., p. 180.

[4] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 111.

[5] The practice of ordeal in the classical Hindu law-books has been summarized by A. B. Keith in his article 'Ordeal (Hindu)' in Hastings' *Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. IX, p. 524. The *Yajnavalkya-smriti* gives five ordeals: (1) sacred libation; (2) the balance where the defendant is weighed twice, and must be of lighter weight the second time; (3) fire, where he must walk across seven circles carrying a piece of red-hot iron in his hand; (4) water, in which he must keep immersed while a runner fetches an arrow shot from a bow, and returns; (5) poison, usually made from aconite, which is drunk, and must show no ill effects during the day. Brihaspati and Pitamaha add other ordeals which include that of removing a hot piece of gold or a ring from a pot of boiling ghee, and licking a red-hot ploughshare. The subject had been fully treated long before in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. I (1798), and later by G. Buhler, 'A translation of the Chapter on Ordeals from the Vyavahara Mayukha', *JASB*, Vol. XXXV (1866), pp. 14-49.

The literature of the ordeal in modern times is extensive. Thurston gives a dramatic account of tests by snake-bite, crocodiles and other means.—*Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, pp. 421ff. Crooke has given a number of witch-ordeals and points out that the

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Lingo's resurrection after three days might be a striking fact did we not remember that it is the general Gond, and even Hindu, custom to perform funerary rites for the dead on the third day. I do not know where the discovery of fire occurs in the Gospel narrative, unless Mr Trench was thinking of the Day of Pentecost. Lingo's final ascension into heaven may be paralleled again and again in classical Hindu mythology and even in the lives of modern Hindu saints. But it is unknown in Gond or Muria thought.

Lingo's 'temptation' raises problems of the greatest interest. Bishop Eyre Chatterton, more cautious than the civilian, does not venture to compare Lingo's experience with that of Christ. He says that it reminds him of 'the same temptation which befell the patriarch Joseph in the house of Potiphar'. But there is no resemblance whatever between the relation of Lingo and the wives of his elder brothers and that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The latter was a temptation to the socially and religiously condemned crime of adultery; the former was not a temptation nor, if Lingo had yielded to the solicitations of the six wives, would it have been a sin. For the climax of the Lingo legend turns on the Indian form of the Levirate.[1] The wife of an elder brother is in 'a joking relation' to the younger brother. He will have the right to marry her when she is a widow, and he may have the tenderest—and even intimate—relations with her while she is a wife. This is true, not only of Gond and Muria, but even—to some degree—of Hindu society.

But although there is little social condemnation of a younger brother who enjoys the society and the bed of his elder brother's wife, there is no doubt that younger brothers who refrain from exercising their privileges are greatly admired. Lingo did not so much avoid a sin as attain a positive virtue by his conduct. But what is at the bottom of the story? Why, if Lingo was to be presented as pure at heart, was he not shown as resisting some temptation that would have involved a really shameful fall, an act of clan-incest, for example, or even ordinary adultery?

To answer this, we must remember that this incident in the Lingo story closely resembles a motif that is very common in Gond—and indeed in nearly all—folk-tales, the conflict between a youngest boy and the jealous elder brothers. This motif was studied by Macculloch in his *Childhood of*

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practice of making a witch walk over burning coals or a heated ploughshare was once common in both India and Europe.—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 271. See also Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. I, p. 260 (boiling cow-dung water used by the Bonthuk); Vol. IV, p. 67 (the Koyi); Vol. IV, p. 185 (the Kuruvikkaran); Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 494 (the Sansia who placed a hot iron plate on the suspect's head); S. C. Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 425 (for ordeals by white ants and boiling water); *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 23 and 113, and Vol. V, p. 115 (the Sikh Jat and the Khasia); K. J. Save, 'Chharas' in *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. IX, Pt. IV (1941), p. 190; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Pt. IIIB, p. 55 (the Bhil); *The Agaria*, p. 167. There is no space to give parallels from other countries.

Two tales resemble the story in the text. Temple, in his *Legends of the Panjab*, gives an account of a heroine who has to prove her chastity by bathing in boiling oil, an incident which affords an exact parallel to the Lingo legend.—R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Panjab* (Bombay, 1884–1901), Vol. I, and *Wide-Awake Stories*, p. 429. Another story is of Prince Sarab who, accused of immorality by his father's Minister, submitted to the ordeal of burning oil in order to prove his innocence. When the Prince entered the cauldron he was unhurt, whereupon the Minister protested that the oil was not hot enough. A bel fruit was thrown into it and burst with great violence, one of the pieces killing the wicked Minister on the spot, and vindicating the Prince.—A. Cunningham, *Archæological Survey of India*, Vol. XVII, p. 99.

[1] The difference between the modern Indian and Jewish version of the Levirate is that in the former there is no idea of providing a son for the dead man. Though this is provided by Manu and the Hindu law-books, it is a notion foreign both to the Indian aboriginals and to the Hindus.

Fiction, where he collected tales with this formula from every part of the world and divided them into eleven distinct cycles. 'Certain of these cycles show only the superiority of the young hero or heroine; others appeal more directly to our sympathy by showing him as the victim of adverse circumstances; others do so still more by setting forth the callous wickedness of the elder sisters or brothers."[1]

The reasons for the popularity of this motif are many. There is the sentimental appeal of the young and weak. In polygamous society the child of the youngest wife is often the most cherished. There is the fact that according to the old custom of Borough-English or *Jungstenrecht*, the youngest son was once the most important member of the family and inherited the bulk of the property. Macculloch gives no Indian examples of this practice but, referring to Mongol, Tartar and Singhpo custom says,

> These survivals over definite European areas, as well as the existence of the custom elsewhere, prove that we are face to face with no mere eccentricity of inheritance; they suggest that this may once have been a universal law. Various reasons have been assigned for the existence of this law. Blackstone and Robertson cite several, and incline to the opinion that the elder sons, having become *pars reipublicae* and ceased to be *pars domus*, had received an allotment of public land, while the youngest remained with his father to carry on the household. Littleton explains it by saying that after the death of his parents the youngest son would be least likely to take care of himself, and hence his maintenance was made sure by casting the inheritance upon him. Gommé and others think it due to the fact that the elders (as in the case of the nomadic Tartars) had gone out to found new homesteads, the father's homestead being then reserved for the youngest son. Perhaps the story of Jacob and Esau—Esau the elder going off to found a new family and home, Jacob the younger staying at home and becoming heir—is a reminiscence of this, but coloured to suit a later age, in which primogeniture was the rule, and some explanation of Esau's disinheritance was needed. Elton derives the practice from the domestic religion centring in ancestral worship and consequent reverence for the hearth, with people who saw no natural pre-eminence in the eldest.
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> This view is probably the best explanation. It suggests that on the youngest son devolved the rites of the worship of the departed father, and as such rites were invariably connected with the hearth as the rallying-place of the home, the hearth and homestead naturally became his by right. We have seen how the homestead is given to the youngest son, while in certain cases explicit reference is made to the hearth. Folk-tales show that the connexion of the youngest child with the hearth had by no means been forgotten; Cinderella, Cinder-jack, the Norse Boots, all have their natural place at the fireside. It has become a position of degradation; but once it was the place of honour. Nor is this quite forgotten, for from it the despised hero or heroine is taken directly to place and power. As for the funeral rights and the ritual of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest-born, the Cinderella tales, in which the gifts are directly supplied to the despised child from the parent's grave, may be a survival.[2]

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[1] J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction* (London, 1905), pp. 350–80

[2] Ibid., pp. 374ff.

But I doubt if the necessity of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest son accounts for the Lingo legend. In Bastar, it is a sister's son or a son-in-law who generally performs the funerary rites. Lingo was—in most versions of the tale—miraculously born and the parents play no part in the sequence of events. The Lingo legends fit into the common folk-tale formula: probably all the elements suggested by Macculloch had their part in its construction: but I believe it is the custom of the Levirate (to which Macculloch does not refer) that gives it its real point. 173

The legend, especially in its Bastar form, cannot be understood apart from the foundation of the ghotul and the horror of adultery so characteristic of Muria society. Here is a very practical reason for the village dormitory—it insulates the elder brothers' wives from the dangerous, legitimate, seductive younger brothers. The youth of the tribe, so distracting to business with its fun and music, is concentrated away from home. The figure of Lingo stands out as the ideal younger brother, who denies himself even his legitimate claims and is absorbed in the ghotul and the motiari. It is not impossible that the legend was composed by a jealous elder brother, once cuckolded and turned reformer, who desired to abolish the disruptive influence of the *ango-dewar* relationship.

There remains the character of Lingo which reminds Bishop Eyre Chatterton 'so strangely' of Jesus Christ. The impropriety of comparing the two figures becomes evident when we remember that Sir Richard Temple had to omit nearly half the poem describing Lingo because it was 'frivolous, improper and objectionable'. I greatly doubt whether either Hislop's or Trench's version represents the original legend as it was told normally to village people. The Pardhan priest in Nagpur was obviously a Hindu convert and would not be likely to repeat passages that would too greatly offend a missionary. I suspect too the hand of the Reverend Baba Pandurang. I doubt also whether Mr Trench's petition-writer would have been likely to have risked any improper elements in the story of Rai Linga. This may sound rather hypercritical, but I have never been able to understand how it was that a cult-hero with a phallic name—Lingo means the phallus—should have become the embodiment of purity. Nor could I understand why the supposed embodiment of the Gond virtues should have been a celibate. The Gond despise celibacy; they believe that a man who dies unmarried turns into an especially unpleasant ghost after his death; the sadhus and other celibates in their folk-tales are without exception presented as the greatest rascals. [589]

The Bastar version of the legend suggests a solution of this problem. Lingo is a phallic deity, as the origin of his name given in the legend on page 241 clearly shows. He does not ascend into heaven, but marries seven wives and has children who people the Bastar shrines with gods. He is the founder of the ghotul, where he has his motiari. This is the true Gond picture of the character of Lingo. Hislop's and Trench's versions are undoubtedly nobler to Western and Brahmin eyes, but they are unreal in a Gond setting.

VI. THE LINGO LEGEND IN BASTAR

Not all the Muria know the legend of Lingo, though all worship him and regard him as the founder of the ghotul. His cult is more or less coterminous with the Pus Kolang, which is danced in his honour. Different versions of the legend have, however, been recorded in the Antagarh, Benur, Amabera and Ghat Jhorian Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil, and at Alor and Kanhargaon in the Kondagaon Tahsil. In north and east Kondagaon, though 173 [883] the Lingo cult is strong, there is some confusion about the legends. In Masora he was given the notable privilege of discovering mahua-liquor in a tale almost identical to that in which the Baiga attribute the same achievement to Nanga Baiga. In other parts of Kondagaon, I have heard him confused with the Gond Bara Pen and he is sometimes supplanted by Bhimul.

Let us now examine these stories, which are of great interest as revealing what is probably an earlier version of the legend than that current in Betul and Nagpur, and are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the Muria's attachment to the ghotul. We will begin with a typical example of what we may call the general version of the legend; it was recorded in the important village of Alor.

> An old man and woman[1] had seven sons. Of these they loved the youngest with special love. The six elder brothers were married, but the youngest remained without a wife. He used to go hunting every day and in the evening he came home and played; soon the six wives of his elder brothers fell in love with him, and used to swing him in a swing outside the house.
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> One day the six elder brothers said, 'Here we are every day working hard in the fields, and this fellow does nothing'. Hearing this, the youngest boy got up early and took the oxen to the fields before his brothers were awake. When they got up and saw the oxen were gone they hurried to the field and found two furrows were completed. They took their bullocks and each went to his own field.
>
> Presently the six wives came to the field with the midday meal and they first fed the youngest boy. When he finished his meal it was his custom to play a little on his instruments. The six women sat listening to the music and only then took what remained to their own husbands. When they saw this, the elder brothers stopped the boy going to plough and told him to remain in the house. But in the house also the boy used to play his music, and the women sat listening to him, and thus delayed taking food to their husbands.
>
> At last the eldest brother said, 'This is a rascal, let's drive him away'. They said to him, 'Be off with you, go away'. The boy went out into the jungle; there he saw a bird sitting in a banyan tree. He shot at the bird and drove a leaf into its body so that the bird and the leaf fell to the ground together. On that leaf was written, 'When a leaf and bird fall together, the hunter will become a Raja'. When he had read this, the boy took the leaf and bird home and showed them to his brothers. They said, 'You may be a Raja, but we don't want you in our house. Be off with you'.
>
> The boy went again into the jungle. He went on and on and on, until at last on a hill he met a tiger which was ploughing with two elephants yoked to its plough. The boy said, 'You must be a very great person to have elephants in your plough'. The tiger said, 'No, there is one much greater than I; that is Lingo'. Then the boy said, 'But I am Lingo'. The tiger said, 'How can I know that? If Lingo beats me in a wrestling-match, then I shall know him to be Lingo'. So the two wrestled together, and the tiger was thrown, and became the boy's servant.

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[1] In Bandopal, however, I was told that Lingo was born from the stone Tipagarh Meta. Thence he came to Kohchor and thence to Semurgaon.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Again they went on and on and on through the jungle till they found in the middle of the road a great Rakshasa lying with its mouth wide open; its chin rested on the ground, its head was in the sky. The tiger said to the boy, 'If you can pass this Rakshasa then you will truly be a Raja'. But Lingo said, 'How can I pass? I am only a boy'. The tiger said, 'Shoot an arrow into the air, and while it is in the sky transfix it with another, shoot another at that, and then shoot again and again till there is a ladder of arrows which you can climb and so pass by'. The boy took his bow and shot arrow after arrow as the tiger said. He tied a rope round his waist and the tiger clung to this. Then they both climbed up the ladder of arrows to Mahapurub.

The tiger said to Lingo, 'There is Mahapurub sitting there; go and see him'. So Lingo went and did Johar before Mahapurub, saying, 'It was written on the banyan leaf that I should be a Raja; but how is this to be?' Mahapurub said, 'First go and spend twelve years in penance. Live alone on a lonely hill and play your music in my honour. Then you will be a Raja and I will give you my daughter as wife. But first you must kill the Rakshasa'.

Lingo came down from the sky and shot a thousand arrows at the Rakshasa and it fell down. Then he went away and on a lonely hill built a house, where he played on eighteen instruments together. Hearing the sound, the boys and girls of the neighbouring villages were filled with desire and ran to him, and every night they came to sleep and play in their ghotul which Lingo had built.

Every day Lingo went to his parents' house for food. The parents told their daughters-in-law to provide him with the best food, and they gave him everything with great love. The brothers again grew jealous and told him to go and plough in their fields. So Lingo took two buffaloes and tied them to the harrow with his own loin-cloth. Then naked he climbed on the harrow and drove the buffaloes across the field to break the clods of earth.

As he was driving the buffaloes back he came face to face with his sisters-in-law who were bringing him his food. His *ling* stood up stout and strong before him, and when the girls saw it they said, 'Look how stout and strong is his *ling*; from today his name must be Lingo'. He got down from the harrow, and dressed himself, then sat and played for an hour, and the women were late again.

The six brothers said to one another, 'Surely this fellow is up to some mischief with our wives, or why should they be so late?' They said, 'Let us beat these women for being late again'. Now the women were afraid and they took thorns to scratch their bodies and tear their breasts and they threw dust on their heads, and lay down to sleep. When their husbands returned they found their house empty and no food ready, but only their wives lying on the ground. When they roused them and asked what was the matter, those women replied, 'Look how that scoundrel has treated us', for they were angry that Lingo had not made love to them.

When the brothers heard this, they were very angry and decided to kill Lingo. So the next day they said to him, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a squirrel on a bija tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Climb up the tree and catch it'. As Lingo was climbing the tree, the six brothers took their bows and arrows; but Lingo saw them and hid

173 behind a branch. Then the six brothers shot together, but the arrows stuck in the tree and did him no harm. From that bija tree came out the sap red like blood and the brothers thought, 'Lingo is dead'. They returned home and performed the funeral rites and prepared a great feast in his honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went out for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead squirrel in his hand. They said, 'Brother, we thought you were dead'. Lingo said, 'My brothers know nothing'. So Lingo and the boys came home. When they saw Lingo the brothers said to one another, 'How did he escape?' and 'Tomorrow we will certainly kill him'.

Next day, the brothers again said, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a porcupine; it ran away into a hollow saja tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Go in and bring it out'. Once Lingo was inside, the brothers stopped up the hole and piled wood round the tree, poured oil upon it and set it on fire. After the tree had blazed for a long time, the brothers supposed Lingo must be dead, but then they heard the sound of the eighteen instruments, all together, within the burning tree. They stood up to see what it was, and the music ceased. They sat down, and it began again. So it was all night. But at dawn the music stopped and the brothers thought, 'Now surely Lingo is dead'.

They returned home and performed the funeral rites again, and again prepared a great feast in Lingo's honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead porcupine in each hand. For there was a squirrel's hole under the tree and Lingo had hidden there and so escaped.

This time the six brothers said to one another, 'Let us ask Lingo to swear whether he has lived pure from our wives or no. If he says he has, let us put him to the ordeal. We will put oil in an iron pan, light a fire below it, and when the oil is boiling we will throw him in and close the pan. "If you are really pure", we will tell him, "the fire will have no power over you".'

The following day the six brothers called blacksmiths from twelve villages and got them to make a great iron pan and its lid. They lit a fire below it, and poured in oil. When the oil was hot Lingo sat in it, and they closed the pan. Soon it was so hot that none could approach, but inside it was cool and from the fire the brothers heard the music of the eighteen instruments.

There is some disagreement as to how Lingo got out of the iron pan. According to the Alor story, the wicked sisters-in-law themselves came weeping and crying 'Come out, little brother, come out', whereupon the iron cover broke and Lingo leapt from the fire. In Karikhodra, the chelik said it was Lingo's mother's brother's daughter, called Bhamnin, who came from Kanker and said, 'If you are impotent you will sit there, but if you are a man you will come out'. Lingo at once stood up and knocked off the lid of his iron prison. In the Benur version, the incident occurred in the Karikhodra jungle where Lingo had a motiari. When she heard of it, she came running to save him. She pushed open the lid of the pan and allowed him to come out. This is what we should expect of a motiari.

Plate XLIX

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Uraon dhangri

Uraon dhangri

Plate I.

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Irpe, a Hill Maria girl of Belimori

[p.242 (B)]

773 At all events, Lingo escapes. Then, according to the Alor story, 'As Lingo sprang from the fire, his foot struck the tinsa tree—and the bark has ever since looked dry and dead on one side. The white ash from his body flew over the saja tree—and it became white and holy. He rubbed his body, black with oil and smoke, against the ebony tree, and ever since its bark has been black. He cursed his sisters-in law saying, "Whenever you have babies, there will be the marks of scratches on your bodies" and so it is with all women to this day.

'But the six brothers were very frightened. They said, "Three times we have tried to kill him, now surely he will kill us. Let us see his face no more". And Lingo said to them, "From today I will not see your faces again". So even today Lingo Pen faces the opposite direction to his brothers.'[1]

There is no fixed ending to the legend. One version makes Lingo ascend into the sky and marry the daughter of Bhagavan. Another marries him to the Brahmin girl from Kanker, who was his mother's brother's daughter. 'But when Lingo went to plough, Aure-tunda made a love-charm for her and carried her away. She had a child and the girl had put the baby in a swing. When the child began to cry Lingo came to see what was the matter. He found his wife gone and followed her footprints into the jungle and killed her in a pit. So Lingo's wife became a goddess and went to live in Tewda. After that Lingo married seven wives.' A third version, from Benur, sends Lingo back to live again in the ghotul. In Chargaon, the story is that the brothers, despairing of killing him, drove him out, and Lingo went alone to the forest near Semra: he built a hut at the foot of a kurlu tree and lived there playing his instruments.

VII. A Metrical Version of the Legend

Metrical versions of the Lingo legend are common in the north central parganas. I have recorded several versions, in Pharasgaon (Kongur Pargana), at Chingnar, at Hurra Penjori, at Jhakri, at Kanhargaon, at Chikhli, at Karikhodra and at Tumasnar. I will give the version recorded at Tumasnar, which shows many interesting variants from the Alor story.

In Upardip there ruled a king.
He had no one; he was sterile.
He was a rich man, he was a cow-shed [for wealth],
His city was as broad and long
As in a day nine ploughs could go.
His house was twelve bamboos high.
There were hunting platforms,
There was much cattle,
The cattle-sheds were paved with sleepers.
That Raja's name was Duruk Sai, his Rani was Kanak Dai.

Under the sleepers of the cattle-shed lived a cobra.
She gave birth to seven babies,[2]
Those babies had but one cord between them.

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[1] This is maintained in current practice. The Anga of Lingo's brothers all face the opposite direction to that of Lingo himself at Semurgaon.

[2] This is one of the clichés of the Indian folk-tale. The hero born of a cobra or protected by it is so common that it is hardly worth giving examples, but reference may be made, among many others, to Dalton, op. cit., p. 231; A. K. Iyer, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Madras, 1909–12), Vol. II, p. 89; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 451; O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India* (Hyderabad, 1941), p. 97.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 They were weeping *taring taring*, the Rani heard them in the night.
Then said Kanak Dai Rani, 'O Raja, in the middle of the night whose child is weeping here?'
She rose and lit a lamp, she went outside to see.
She found the children and told the Raja, 'There are babies here'.
When she told the Raja this, he too went out to see them.

He approached the babies, and there was the cobra.
She tried to bite him, but the Rani begged her,
'I have no children; give me these'.
The snake was pleased, and gave them to the Rani.
There was one cord for seven babies, how were they to cut it?
They cut it with a curved sword, they cut it with a knife,
They cut it with a straight knife, they cut it with a straight sword.
But they could not cut the cord; both Raja and Rani were exhausted.
There was a small piece of bamboo there, with this they cut the cord,
They cut it with a single blow and separated the babies.
They took them to the house and cared for them.

Slowly the children grew, the Raja gave them names.
They were Use Mudial, Raja Mudial, Budha Mudial,
Soma Mudial, Kana Hurra Mudial, Kana Mudial,
The youngest was Lingo Mudial.

Slowly the children grew, they played in the village.
They went out to hunt with little bows and arrows.
They gained knowledge and desired to bring wives.
But they knew there were no wives for them.
'Let us leave this place and go to Nadumbhum',
Thinking thus, they came down by the silken rope.

The seven brothers made their camp in Nadumbhum.
Six brothers were married, their wives are still named,
Bhumanthar, Dhakardeoni, Mardeoni, Theorajunghe,
Mahipurjunghe, Halayindokari, these were their wives.
Only Lingo remained unmarried.
His hair reached up to Porrobhum above,
His tail hung down to Tarbhum below.

At one time he played eighteen instruments of music.
There was a *pitorka* gong at his knee, a *gulguda* drum at his waist,
From one shoulder hung the *mandri* drum, from the other hung the *dhol*.
There were bells tied at his back, there were *paijna* on his feet.
In his hands were *sarangi*, *dusir*, *dhumir*,
In his hands were *tohendor*, *mohir*, *jihdir*, *chitkul*, *hikum*,
In his hands were *parrai*, *hundir*, *charahewa*, *danthar*,
On all these instruments he played at once,
There were love-charms in them, all who heard them were entranced.

The six brothers were busy ploughing their land,
They were working in the Field of Frogs.
Their wives carried their food to them in the field.
But when Lingo played his music,
Those who were fetching water stood still to hear,

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Those who were carrying food to their husbands stood still to hear,
The six wives forgot their work and stood as in a trance.

The husbands were angry, their food was always late.
The eldest brother sent one of them to see what was the matter.
He came to the house and hid behind a grain-bin,
But when he heard the music he too was entranced and lay down asleep behind the grain-bin.
At last the food was cooked, and as the women were going his wife saw him,
And left his share beside him in his hiding-place.

The wives were late again, and next day the eldest brother came himself,
He saw all that happened, and was very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking he went to his field at Huppelolod.

As Lingo played, the village girls gathered round him and danced,
The chelik came too with their drums,
They made a ghotul and lived near him, for there were love-charms in his instruments.
But none loved him as did those six wives,
His elder brothers' wives, his *ange*.
But he cared nothing for them, he loved the motiari,
All his desire was to dance and play with the motiari.

Then those wives were very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking they went inside their house.
'We will not take food to the field today, let us go to fetch thorns from the jungle,
We will scratch our bodies with the thorns till the blood flows.'
So thinking they went to bring thorns from the jungle.
They brought the thorns and scratched their bodies,
They tore their clothes, the blood came from their bodies.
Each lay down in a separate corner of the house.

At sun-standing time the brothers were looking for their meal,
They were hungry, they grew very angry.
'Let us leave our ploughing and go to drink our gruel at home.'
So thinking they went to the house, and found their wives lying here and there in corners.
They said, 'Why are you each sleeping in a corner?
What is the matter that you should be so sleeping?'
'Nothing is the matter, but your brother—
He ruined our honour, beat us and tied us up.
He tore our clothes and blood came from our bodies,
If you beat him to death, then only can we go on living here.'

The brothers believed the story true,
They too wished to destroy Lingo.
'Let us take him out to hunt, and kill him in the jungle.'
So thinking they took him with them,
To hunt for barking-deer and hares. Thus they deceived their brother.
They went to the great forest, they found nothing but a jungle rat.

113 The rat ran up a bija tree and nobody could climb it.
They told Lingo to climb the tree.
Lingo got ready and he climbed the tree.
'Now he is climbing, let us shoot him with our arrows.'
Each arrow weighed twelve maunds, but not one struck him.
They hit the bija tree and its sap came out like blood.
When they saw the blood of that tree, they thought they had pierced the body,
Thinking Lingo dead, they returned to their house,
They told their wives, 'We have killed Lingo'.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma* for the funeral.
The *akomāma* came and they performed the rites.
Lingo climbed the tree and killed the rat,
He took it to his ghotul and roasted it.
After three days he went home playing on his instruments.
When the women heard the music they cried, 'Lingo is coming, you told us he was dead'.
Seeing Lingo the brothers were ashamed.
All the *akomāma* returned to their homes.

Again the brothers plotted how to kill Lingo.
'Let us take him to the jungle, this time we will certainly kill him.'
So thinking they went to the great jungle, they found nothing but a porcupine.
The porcupine ran into a hole in the ground.
They told Lingo to follow it.
Lingo got ready and went into the hole.
The brothers brought great logs of wood and blocked the hole.
They set fire to the wood. 'Lingo is burnt to death.'
So thinking they went home and told their wives.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma*.
All the *akomāma* came and performed the funeral rites for Lingo.

There was a Rau, the master of that jungle.
The porcupine was his servant and led Lingo to his house.
The Rau was away taking roots to the bazaar, but his wife was there.
When Lingo played his eighteen instruments, she was enchanted.
She gave him four porcupines, and showed him another way by which he could escape.
Lingo went to his ghotul, and cooked one porcupine for the boys and girls;
He sent three porcupines to his brothers, and began to play his music.
The wives heard the music and all abused their husbands.
'Look, Lingo is coming; you told us he was dead.'
The brothers were ashamed; the *akomāma* went away angry.

Once again the brothers plotted how they might destroy their brother.
'We will put him to the test; we will try him by oil and fire.'
They went to Karikhodra, where still stands the Pillar of Oaths.
They made an iron vessel of twelvefold smelted iron.
Twelve pots of oil they poured into it,
They put Lingo into it and covered it,

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They fixed the lid in place with strong nails.
They made a hearth and put the vessel on it.
They brought twelve cartloads of wood and lit the fire.
'Now Lingo will surely die.' So thinking they went home.

As the oil boiled, Lingo began to play his music.
When they heard the sound the brothers and their wives despaired.
From inside the vessel, Lingo kicked the lid away.
The lid he kicked fell on the Tata Hill,
The vessel turned to stone and is still seen at Karikhodra.
Lingo came out, he leaned against the ebony tree and burnt it black,
He kicked the tinsa tree and all one side was burnt.
He kicked the saja and it turned white; today we call it impotent—
It is impotent as Lingo was with his brothers' wives.

'He will surely kill us now.'
So thinking the six brothers ran away.
Lingo called to Use Mudial and told him not to be afraid.
Use Mudial asked him, 'How will the world continue?
When they hear your music no one will work, all must stand still and listen.'
Lingo said, 'I will give my instruments to the chelik and motiari.
They will live in the ghotul and no one will hear their music.
So will the world continue so long as there are ghotul'.

The other brothers ran away and scattered through the jungle.
Use Mudial stayed with Lingo and worked with him in the fields.
When Lingo died Use Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Raja Mudial went at once to the Maria Kingdom;
Budha Mudial ran away to Rai Kursai;
Soma Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Kana Hurra Mudial fled to Garanja, Kana Mudial to Dhanora;
Lingo went to Semurgaon. 'They are not my brothers,
They are my enemies, I will not see their faces.'
So saying he took an oath,
The oath taken that day remains till now.

Lingo went to Kesurboda, there he was married.
Lingo had seven wives, all of them were Brahmins.
One lived in Kongur, her name was Mudri Muttai.
Each day she husked twelve measures of rice and ate it.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The second wife lived in Changori with her son Bal Kuar.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
Now Bal Kuar lives at Kotori.
The third wife was Hirgomiro, she lived in Baneri.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The fourth wife quarrelled with him and he sent her to Bhaisgaon in the Kanker Raj.
He sent the fifth away to Dhaneli in the Kanker Raj, for she too was a witch.
The sixth we have forgotten, but the last was Netturgundi's mother.
Lingo was working with his hoe in the Cat-stone Field,
As he was working there his wife brought him gruel to drink.
She put the gruel beneath a tree and tied a swing.

There his son slept, his name was Netturgundi.
The mother went into the field to weed the grass.

Heweh Tunda Kshattriya[1] carried away Lingo's wife.
Netturgundi was weeping *leveng leveng*,
Hearing the noise, Lingo came to see where his wife had gone.
He searched but could not find her.
He went carrying an ox-goad.
He saw on the way the footprint of Heweh Tunda Kshattriya.
Seeing the footprint he thrust the goad into the ground.
It turned into a bamboo that can be seen today.
His bullocks ran away dragging the plough to the Budhwari Mari Meta,
There they turned to stone and still are seen.
Lingo tied Netturgundi round his neck and went to find his wife.
He met Heweh Tunda Kshattriya half way.
When Heweh Tunda Kshattriya saw Lingo he left the girl and ran away.
Lingo caught his wife and pushed a peg into her vagina.
He beat her and cut her into seven pieces; these pieces became stones.

He followed Heweh Tunda Kshattriya to the hill by Chichgaon.
There was a cave and Heweh Tunda hid there.
Lingo put twelve cartloads of wood outside to make smoke.
Heweh Tunda ran out and fled away leaving no trace behind.
Lingo gave up the search and wondered what to do.
He went to Bagjar, from there he went to Penjori.
Thence he went to Baskur, thence to Dudhpar, and at last came to Semurgaon.

There was at Chikhli a family of the Partabi clan.
Lingo began to think of them. 'They should do some service for me.'
Sona and Rupa Partabi had seven daughters-in-law,
They went to get grass for brooms.
They cut the grass and made it into bundles.
They pulled up a siari creeper, root and all, to tie them.
They stripped the creeper with their teeth and tied the bundles.
The smallest girl had only seven handfuls in her bundle.
Lingo Pen liked this girl and his desire was for her.
The six elder sisters lifted up their bundles,
But the seventh could not raise her little bundle.
All seven had to lift it before they could put it on her head.
When they reached home the others put their bundles in the house,
But the seventh bundle stuck to the girl's head and they all had to pull it down.

The youngest girl put her bundle in the pigsty,
All the pigs died and the Partabi wondered why.
Then she put it with the hens and the hens all died.
She put it in the cattle-shed and the cows all died.
She put it with the buffaloes and the buffaloes died.
At last she threw it into the buffalo pond and the Partabi went to ask the Siraha,
'What is this thing that troubles us? Why are my cattle dead?'

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[1] Literally, 'the warrior who was like gum so that anyone who touched him stuck to him'.

The Siraha said, 'The mark of Lingo Mudial Pen is here;
You must worship Lingo Pen'.
When the Siraha said this, the Partabi said,
'When my animals come to life, I will worship Lingo Pen'.

The Siraha bade him go and look at his animals.
The Partabi went and saw that the ears of the dead were quivering.
He went again and now each pig and hen and cow and buffalo
Spoke to him in its own tongue, bidding him worship Lingo Pen.
He went a third time and now they were all alive.
The Partabi thought then that what the Siraha said was true.
'This is a true Pen, for the cattle are alive.'
Since that day the Partabi clan offer sacrifice to Lingo.
'This is no ordinary Pen, this is a true Pen.
He taught us songs and stories,
He taught the girls and boys to live together in the ghotul,
He is still there in Semurgaon.
We take his name and give him the sevenfold Johar.'

VIII. THE STORY OF USARENGI PALLI

This version of the Lingo legend is not known to all the Muria, and in Randhna, a village to the north-east of Kondagaon, I recorded a curious variant in which the foundation of the ghotul is ascribed to a hero with a Telugu name—Usarengi Palli.[1] But in this version also Lingo plays a heroic and sacrificial part. He comes down to earth to save man from the death that Mahapurub was planning to send to the world; he bears in his own body the heavy blows of the divine wrath—although, with a characteristically primitive touch, he escapes before he is actually killed and allows Usarengi Palli to suffer death instead.

> When the world was created, there was a city in the Middle World, such a city that on one needle's point nine lakhs of roofs could stand; it was twelve kos long and twelve kos broad. Here lived seven score chelik and seven score motiari; they were all of one mind—if one went somewhere they all went there, if one came home they all returned. There was great love among them all. One day they said to one another, 'Here are many of us, boys and girls together, and we regard everyone as equal. But we need a leader'. Now in the house of Usarengi Palli there was always food to eat and liquor to drink. The boys made him their chief. Among the motiari was one called Shri Belosa; she was made the leader of the girls.
>
> These boys and girls used to sleep together; they went to work together. One day Usarengi Palli thought, 'Here are all these boys and girls, but we have no house to sleep in'. So thinking, he made a house. Its door-frame was a lizard, its walls were made of *chipa* fish, its door was of *dandai* fish, its pillars were the horns of the great sambhar, the cross-beams were the bones of *bhimi* fish tied with prawns, and instead of grass the roof was covered with peacocks' feathers. In this house the boys slept in one long line, the girls slept in another long line. Only Usarengi Palli and Shri Belosa slept together.

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[1] The story used also to be told by an old man in Barbaiia, but he has died and no one has inherited it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 In the Upper World, the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang and played; the sound came down to the Middle World and Usarengi Palli heard it. When he heard it, he made a fiddle and a tambourine, and when the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang in the Upper World, Usarengi Palli listened and played the same tunes on his instruments in the Middle World. So passed many days.

One day Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'Brother, here are seven score chelik and seven score motiari. We do not know how to dance or sing. Teach us so that we too may have happiness'. Usarengi Palli said, 'All these days I have never left you. I have never gone anywhere. How could I learn anything that you do not know?' Shri Belosa replied, 'Every day you play on your instruments; certainly you know how to dance and sing'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, if you would really learn to dance and sing, you must be ready to go where I tell you'. Shri Belosa and the seven score chelik and seven score motiari replied, 'Where you tell us there we will go'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, tomorrow we will go'. They all got ready and went outside the village to a fig tree. Shri Belosa bathed and put on a silk sari sixteen hands long, and garlands, rings, and bracelets. Each girl brought a *guppa*-basket, and each boy a *dhuti*-basket.

Usarengi Palli wore a *pitambar*-cloth,[1] and a turban of sixteen hands tied *bail-bânwar*;[2] he had a *dhuti*-basket under his arm, in one hand his fiddle and in the other his tambourine. Singing and playing Usarengi Palli danced his way to the fig tree, where the chelik and motiari saluted him.

When they were all ready Mahapurub let down a thread of silk from the Upper World on to the fig tree, and they climbed up the thread into the Upper World. There was a banyan tree, and they made their camp under its shade. But Usarengi Palli went on alone to find the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul; they had been dancing so long that they had sunk into the ground up to their waists. Usarengi Palli saluted them and they called him to dance with them. He asked, 'Whose hand shall I take? Who will teach me?' The youngest brother Lingo took him by the hand and taught him what to do. As they began to dance the seven score chelik and seven score motiari came to that place and saluted them. Shri Belosa gave tobacco to everyone. When the dance was over, the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul said to Usarengi Palli, 'Now you must dance and sing'. When Lingo began to dance he went fifteen paces forward and fifteen paces back, and he danced so that they were not hungry by day or sleepy by night.

Now the songs Usarengi Palli sang went into the *guppa*-baskets of the girls and the *dhuti*-baskets of the boys. The girls' baskets had no holes and so the songs remained in them—and to this day the songs of the girls are strong and true. But the boys' *dhuti*-baskets had a hole and the songs escaped, and still the singing of boys is bad.

When the dance was over, and they had saluted their hosts, Usarengi Palli took the chelik and motiari back to their camp beneath the banyan tree. They went down the silken thread back to the Middle World.

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[1] *Pitambar*—The Maharaja wears this red or yellow silk dhoti at Dasara. It costs from two to three hundred rupees. It is also spread over his body after death.

[2] Tied as bullocks go round the pole on the threshing-floor, anti-clockwise.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

There they prepared every kind of instrument of music. Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'So far we haven't given you a name. Today we are going to make you our Kotwar'. He said, 'No, I don't want a name', but all the boys and girls said, 'We are going to give you a name'. Shri Belosa sent two or three boys for liquor to Badaur Kalarin. She was sitting on a golden seat pouring water into the still, and the boys bought three rupees worth of liquor from her. Shri Belosa thought in her mind, 'Now today we are going to give Usarengi Palli his new name. He must have a turban for his head and a new sleeping-mat'. So thinking she went to a Ganda's house, and bought a cloth twelve hands long. She made a mat for him. She called the elders of the village, and when they came she said, 'Today we have made Usarengi Palli our chief and have given him the name of Kotwar'. She made Usarengi Palli sit on his new mat, tied the turban round his head, and gave him liquor to drink saying, 'From today our elder brother's name is Kotwar'. They all drank and then the elders said, 'Show us the new dances that you have learnt'. They danced and from that day these dances spread throughout the world and the ghotul was begun.

Now so long as Usarengi Palli was alive, there was no death in the world. But when Mahapurub saw that the seven score chelik and seven score motiari were learning all his art from Usarengi Palli, and no one was dying and no souls came to him, he began to consider how he could bring about the death of men. But the youngest of the Lingo brothers discovered what Mahapurub was planning to do, and filled with desire to save Usarengi Palli and all men, he came down to earth and went secretly to live with Usarengi Palli to protect him.

Mahapurub sent Dhurban, the arrow that kills with earth, to destroy Usarengi Palli. This arrow pierces the body and its evil spreads inside so that the man swells and dies. But Lingo stood in the way and received the arrow in his own body. Then Mahapurub sent one arrow after another, he sent a flight of arrows, and Lingo received them all in his own body. After that Mahapurub sent Aginban, the arrow of fire, but Lingo caught this also in his own body and saved Usarengi Palli. At last Mahapurub sent his messenger with a great stick to beat Usarengi Palli. But Lingo caught as many of the blows as he could bear on his own body, until he thought that if he suffered any more he too would die, so he escaped and the messenger fell upon Usarengi Palli and beat him to death. As Usarengi Palli lay dying he called the seven score chelik and seven score motiari to him and said, 'Now I must leave you' and so died.

The chelik and motiari took up his body and carried it dancing and singing to the burial ground. After they had buried it and were going to bathe in the river, Shri Belosa lingered behind. She had always looked after Usarengi Palli; she had cooked his food and spent her days and nights with him. On this day she had brought haldi from her house tied in a corner of her sari. When she was alone she put a haldi mark above the grave where the head of her lover was, and another mark on her own forehead, saying, 'We two were yoked together. I will never marry now. We lived as if we were married, and now with this mark we are truly married'.

On the day of the funeral feast when they should have taken food and the feet of the pig and goat they ate to the grave, they forgot to take the feet. After a few days the seven score girls went to kill fish; as

773 they were busy at the work, evening came on, and they bathed in the river. As they began to walk home, night fell, and they had to pass by the grave of Usarengi Palli. When they reached the place, they put down their *guppa*-baskets and sat down. Shri Belosa said, 'All your queens have come!' At that word, suddenly Usarengi Palli came out of the earth and took the girls into the grave with him. That night every one of the seven score motiari became pregnant.

The next day, Shri Belosa said, 'Come, let us go to sell our fish in the bazaar and buy ourselves things with the money'. Usarengi let them out of the grave, and when they reached the bazaar they found that their fish were large and fine and they soon sold them. Some bought necklaces, some bought rings, and as they busied themselves with their purchases, night fell. They could not find their way back to the grave, so they went into the village. There Usarengi Palli's mother was weeping, remembering her son. Shri Belosa said to the other girls, 'Look, our mother-in-law is weeping. Come, let us go to her and comfort her'. The girls went to the old woman and greeted her. The old woman said, 'Where have you been all this time? Your parents are looking for you everywhere'. Shri Belosa said, 'We just went to the bazaar'.

Now Usarengi Palli, finding himself lonely in his grave, said in his mind, 'The seven score boys surely went to that bazaar, and are dancing and making merry with the girls'. He took a great stick and got out of the grave and went to the bazaar. But it was too late; there was no one there. So he went thence to his mother's house, and found the seven score girls sleeping, and his mother and Shri Belosa watching by them. When he saw his mother he embraced her. She begged him to stay with her. But he was angry and said, 'What have you ever done for me? No one cares for me. I will not stay'. As he said this, there came into the mind of his mother and the seven score girls that they had forgotten to take the trotters of the pig eaten at the funeral feast to Usarengi Palli's grave. They got up and went hastily to the grave but there was no sign. The old mother returned home weeping loudly, and Usarengi Palli took the seven score girls with him into the grave and they were not seen again.

IX. LINGO AND THE GHOTUL

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773 To the Muria perhaps the most significant thing about Lingo was his foundation of the ghotul system; this was the greatest treasure he has given mankind; neither the discovery of fire,[1] the gift of mahua liquor,[2] nor the invention of music can compare with this. The ghotul is an integral part of the Lingo legend; even in the Betul version there is a hint of it in the oft-repeated statement that Lingo could not attend to his brothers' wives because he was always playing with the village maidens.

The significance of the ghotul for the legend is this, that it explains why Lingo was 'chaste', why he achieved so supererogatory a virtue as to turn a 'joking-relation' into one of avoidance, why he did not let himself be seduced by his brothers' wives. Like any good chelik his attention was absorbed by the ghotul, not only—be it noted—by its erotic delights, but by the eighteen instruments played there, by the songs and dances, the discipline, the fellowship.

Every version of the Bastar legend stresses Lingo's association with the ghotul. The Alor version ends: 'From the days of Lingo the ghotul is built in every village, and the boys and girls live there together without sin. So long as a girl wears combs in her hair she may play and laugh with the chelik, but when we see a girl without a comb, we say nothing to her, for she must be a man's wife. And as Lingo was twice in the fire and no evil touched him, so it is with the boys and girls in their ghotul.'

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[1] See p. 262.

[2] See p. 263.

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The Karikhodra story concludes: 'When Lingo died, they made ghotul everywhere in his memory and to make him happy. For as the children dance and play he rejoices.'

And the Benur tale ends: 'Lingo lived in the ghotul, and the magic of his music drew the boys and girls to him. Because of Lingo no evil can come to the ghotul; no witch can enter there, or fever or disease; and for three years from the blossoming of her flower no girl can conceive.'

The first ghotul, where Lingo lived after his elder brothers married (the boys, it will be remembered, had no parents but it was equally necessary that the youngest should not witness his elder brothers' relations with their wives) and which was called *dinda-mahāl*, or palace of the unmarried, was a beautiful place.

> Lingo's ghotul was beautiful as the horns of bison, beautiful as a horse's throat. Its central pillar was a python, the poles of the roof were *mahāmandal* snakes, the beam was a *dāman* snake, the cross poles were cobras. The bamboo framework of the roof was made of kraits tied together with vipers and covered with the tails of peacocks. The verandah roof was made of bulbul feathers. The walls were of bod-fish bones, the door was made of the crimson *silyāri* flowers, the door-frames of the bones of ogres, the fastening were *ular-malom* snakes. The floor was plastered with the flour of urad pulse. The *kutul*-seats were crocodiles. There was an Anga there of saja wood swung from the roof by *pirpitti* snakes.
>
> Lingo himself wore a turban like a white gourd flower; his dhoti was coloured silk; his shirt shone in the sun; his clogs were made of sandal wood, his stockings of mongoose fur, his belt was a *gidarra* snake; as he walked he sparkled. He carried a crooked stick in his hand; he walked as if he were husking rice.[1] That is why we dance so slowly and carry an axe over the shoulder.
>
> Every day Lingo used to go hunting, and every night to the ghotul. His gun was an ebony branch, his bullets were wild berries, he sat in the nest of the *rala* bird above a salt-lick. When he had shot enough, he would return to the ghotul. Belosa and Manjharo would welcome him, and take his mat. Malko and Jalko spread it on the ground, Dulosa was his blanket. Because of the love-charms in his eighteen instruments all the unmarried boys and girls would come running to the ghotul. Lingo's ghotul name was Manjhi; it was given him by Belosa and Manjharo. He himself gave the girls their names. Belosa and Manjharo sat by Lingo and combed his hair, they scratched his arms with their combs and massaged him with oil. Belosa gave him ganja—there was no tobacco then. Lingo's comb was made of dhaman wood. After massaging Lingo, the girls got up and saluted him with Johar,[2]

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[1] 'In Old Calabar, when a man passed the sacred objects of Egbo he walked as if he were lame.—Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), p. 116. Compare the limping dance of the priests of Baal.

[2] The Johar was the supreme achievement of Rajput chivalry. A besieged garrison, perceiving its fate hopeless, prepared for the Johar as for a wedding: the women threw themselves into a furnace, and the men sallied out to die in battle with the enemy.—

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> then danced to the music of his eighteen instruments until they were weary, when they lay down and slept.

The traditional names of the first motiari differ from place to place. In Jhakri, they gave the following list:

Godakare Mode, whose navel was long as the axle of a cart, the leader, who collected the girls and gave them their orders.
Belosa, her assistant.
Kurumtuse Buke, whose duty was to distribute things—tobacco, parched rice, liquor.
Hinahibe Bire, who made the bamboo pins for leaf-cups and plates.
Akintare Jare, who spread the leaves which served as mattresses at bedtime.

Among the names of the first chelik are:

Mankor Singa, the leader.
Jiha Guta Soma, whose duty was to bring wood.
Karata Guta Soma, who had to make the fire.

At first things did not go altogether smoothly. The boys stole wood from the village houses, they relieved themselves on the paths, they neglected their work for their dancing. There was even an attempt to stop the ghotul. 'At first', so runs a Masora account, 'there were twelve score motiari and twelve score chelik who came to listen to the music of the eighteen instruments. Lingo caught them by the hands and they danced and danced and danced. Soon the children's parents grew angry and said, "Here is a man ruining our children" and they forbade them to go to the ghotul. At that Lingo was angry and he changed his form and went from house to house bringing death and disease. The people went to the Siraha, who discovered the cause and told the villagers to let their children go again to the ghotul.'

After this Lingo began to teach the chelik and motiari ideals of discipline and service. One night he came leaning on his stick, and when the girls and boys heard it tapping on the ground they kept very quiet. He sat down and taught them never to relieve themselves on the village paths, not to have anything to do with married women, not to steal wood from the villagers. Then in order that they should not spend too much time on dancing, he allotted them certain seasons when they should dance all day. During the rest of the year they should dance only at night. At Jhakri, Raunu gave other details:

> The first fire was lit by Lingo in the ghotul. It was the Pus Kolang fire. Lingo taught the boys how to go from village to village dancing in his honour. The boys tried; Lingo became Gain and showed them their mistakes. The next morning, they looked at the ashes of the fire, and there were the marks of a bullock's hoofs. Three days this happened and Lingo declared it a good omen. He called his tiger and they went out to dance, leaving the girls behind. 'This is in honour of Lingo', they said, 'and whoever goes to a girl will die.'
>
> Lingo took the boys outside the village and made them stand facing it. He put seven little heaps of rice, seven aonra rings and seven bits

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J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1920), Vol. I, p. 555. The expression is now used as a greeting by many tribes. Tod describes it as a salutation sent by a Rajput chief to an inferior landholder (ibid., Vol. I, p. 165). For the Muria it is a greeting between equals.

Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Hill Maria boys in front
of the Itulnar ghotul

Bison-horn Maria girls in the
court of the Dugeli ghotul

[p.254(a)]

Hill Maria

Plate LII.

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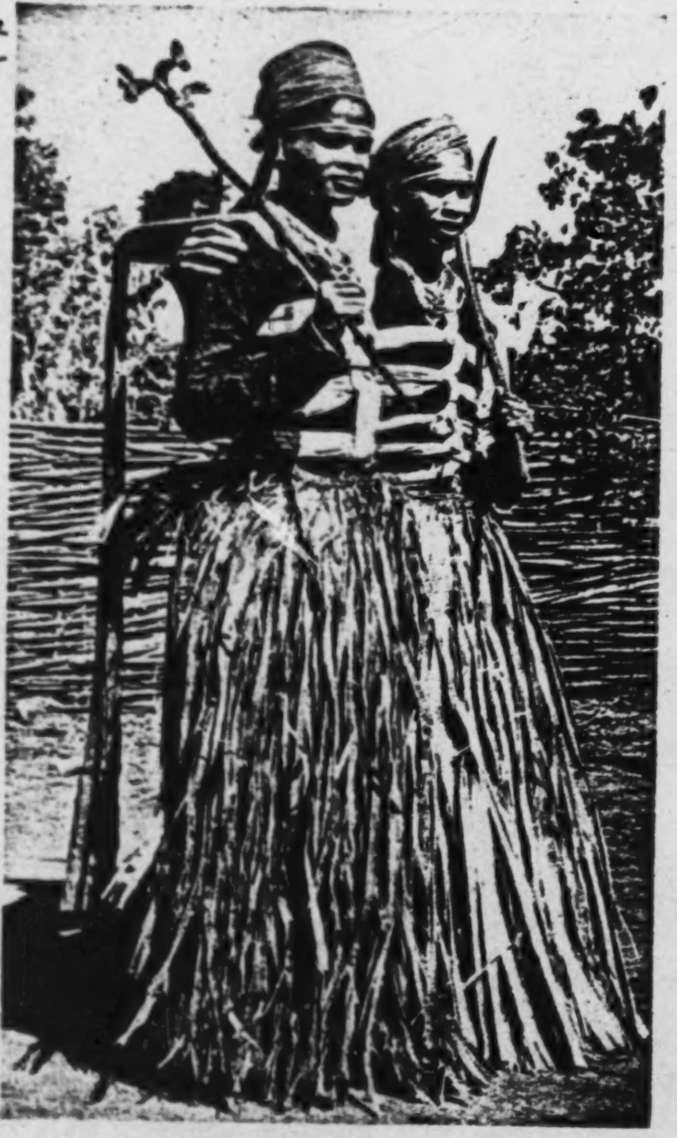

Hill Maria chelik in dancing dress

[p.254 (B)]

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of slag on the ground before them, and prayed to Tallur Muttai, 'Look after these children. Keep them safe from other gods'. Lingo gave fire to Mankor Singa, and bade him tend it so that it did not go out till they returned. Then they went to dance in seven villages.

After seven days Godakare Mode and the three score motiari brought a bamboo and decorated its shoots with gold. 'If they have been faithful to us and if all is going well, it will stand up of its own accord and no one will be able to pull it up.' So thinking they welcomed the boys home. The boys hung their sticks on the tree and sat down to smoke. The bamboo stood of its own accord and none could uproot it.

Then came Lingo and was pleased with the stick. He tried to pull it up, but it would not move. Then he cut it down, at the bottom, near the ground. From the stump grew a semur tree; ever since, the semur tree has had thorns like the small branches of a bamboo.

Then the motiari said, 'We too must go to dance with you'. So Lingo took them for the Chait Dandar and the Hulki dances. At Diwali, the girls said to the boys, 'You go off by yourselves in Pus; we will go to dance by ourselves at Diwali'.

The tradition of Lingo's association with the ghotul is still very much alive. Every year thousands of boys take great pains to perfect a complicated and rather tedious dance and set out on a pilgrimage in his honour, which must be marked by accurate performance and complete chastity. In some ghotul, as at Masora, a dhol drum hangs near the door in honour of Lingo. Lingo in his turn protects the ghotul which he has founded; no evil dream can approach, no sin can be committed, and no girl will become pregnant for three years after puberty.

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The chelik remember Lingo, with their ancestors and the Earth, whenever they drink liquor; they offer him a few drops of mahua spirit whenever they play their drums at a marriage; even in eastern Kondagaon, they invite him to weddings saying, 'This is your marriage, your haldi-oil, not ours but yours'; they still sing many songs in his honour. Most of these are inexpressibly boring, consisting as they do of a long and largely inaccurate recital of Lingo's relations. This poetic and romantic figure has not inspired much poetry in his worshippers. The following song is typical.

Lingo Pata

Re re loyo re re la rela
Re re loyo re re la re re la rela

Bāra bhai lingo ra layor,	O twelve Lingo brothers,
Pinding kamkāng niya ra layor.	There's haldi and flour for you.
Dāy ra lingo dāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Pinding kamkāng yehti ra lingo.	With haldi and flour we anoint you.
Wāyura pāta wai ra lingo.	May songs unknown come to us.
Wāyuna dāka wai ra lingo.	May steps unknown come to us.
Pahili pāta niya ra lingo,	The first song is yours,
Maria pāta mawa ra lingo.	The Maria song is ours.
Pahili dāka niya ra lingo.	The first steps are yours,
Maria pāta layor ra lingo.	The Maria song is the chelik's.
Wāy ra lingo wāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Nana wāyla parron ra layor.	I can't come, chelik.
Nāwa buto mania ra layor.	I've got work to do, chelik.
Kudār holāng butong ra layor.	I've got to fix the handle of my hoe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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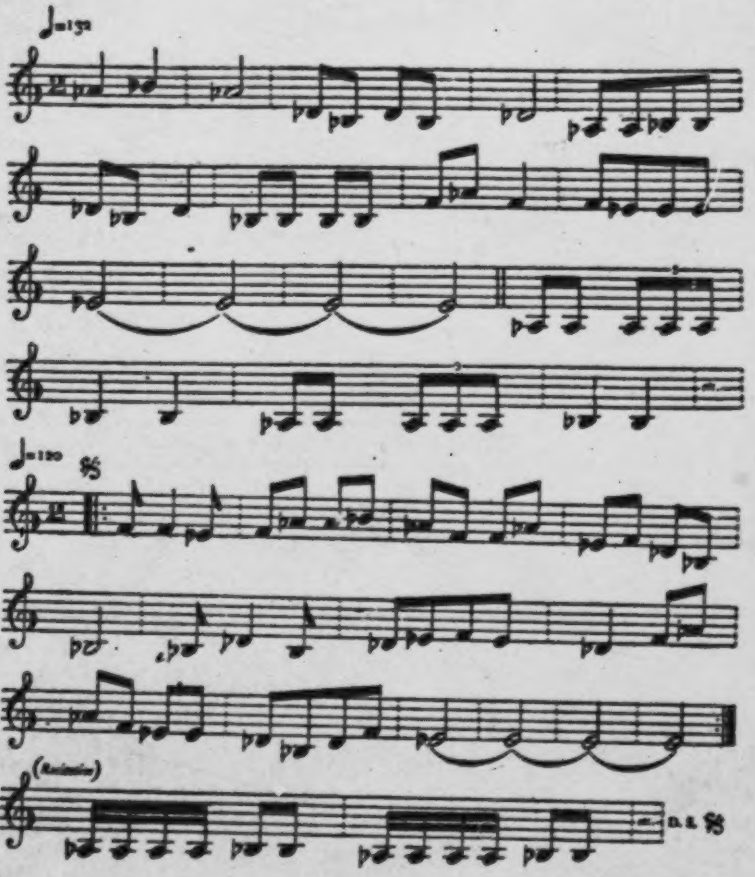
At Masora, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balun, Lingo!	Lingo, say, Lingo!
Kāy kāie āy chelikman?	Why have you come, chelik?
Bila ďhare bila newta parli bila ďhare jao.	We've come to invite you to the wedding.
Macho buta āse.	I have work to do.
Tucho kāy buta āse?	What work have you to do?
Macho korki ďheta bharto āse.	I must make a handle for my hoe.
Tucho bigur nitoy git gobind tucho.	Without you nothing can be done.
Pahilo tucho sigcho mand.	To you liquor must first be given.
Aru sigcho hardi.	The haldi must first be put on you.
Tucho āy nibnato git banu āy.	Only with you the song goes well.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

In Penjori, near Semurgaon, the Gaita explained how Tallur Muttai (who is no other than Mother Earth) and Kadrengal her consort (who is lord of the forest and the *dahi* clearing) are connected with the ghotul. 883 773

> In a saja tree were born a girl Tallur Muttai and a boy Kadrengal. They gave a dream to Lingo and told him 'We have been born in a saja tree: give us a place to live'. So Lingo made them a small hut and they lived there. To please them he used to play eighteen instruments at once. In these were love-charms which drew all the boys and girls of the village to listen.

In many ghotul, Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal are honoured as well as Lingo and with him protect the children from harm.

X. Lingo and Creation

The creation stories of the Muria are on the same pattern as similar stories throughout the central portion of peninsular India.[1] The main difference is that Lingo, at least in the older stories, takes the place either of Bhimsen or the other cult-heroes which various tribes exalt as the chief actors in their mythology; and that Kadrengal, a rather mysterious figure, vaguely regarded as a forest-god, and his wife Tallur Muttai (Mother Earth) play the parts that in other areas are allotted to Mahadeo and Parvati. The following story was recorded in Kokori in east Kondagaon. 773

> In the old days there was an earth. At the time when Lingo and his brothers were born Mahapurub turned the world topsy-turvy and it was eaten by the earth-worm, so the Middle World became nought but water. There were two young children on the earth. God put life into their bodies by poking them in the back: the marks of his fingers still remain. They hid inside a gourd which grew up out of the water as a great creeper and reached the heavens.
>
> Presently the worm excreted the earth and some of it fell on a siari leaf. That earth began to weep, 'Who is there to serve me, for all mankind are drowned?' When Lingo heard that weeping he went to see what was the matter. Meanwhile Mahapurub had plucked the gourd growing from the great creeper in the heavens and found inside the two small children. 'Where can these children live?' So thinking he sent his crow to search for it. The crow flew and flew across the ocean until at last it saw Lingo and his brothers driving their harrow over the sea. Wherever the harrow went there was land, where it went crooked or missed a place there was water and a river, where the earth was piled up at the side there was a mountain. When the crow saw this it flew back and told Mahapurub that the earth was made again, and the two children were sent to live there.
>
> Mahapurub told the boy and girl that they should marry each other but they refused saying, 'We are brother and sister'. So the smallpox goddess came and separated them and each got smallpox.[2] Afterwards when they met they did not know who they were, for their faces were

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[1] Compare Roy, *The Mundas*, App. I, pp. 5-7; Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 400-24; A. Campbell, 'The Traditions of the Santals', *JBORS*, Vol. II (1916), pp. 15ff.; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 262; D. D. Agarwal, 'Ethnographical Notes on the Cheros', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 205; W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV-VI (1940-1), *passim*. *The Baiga*, p. 308; *The Agaria*, pp. 88f.

[2] I have recorded this idea among the Juang, Kond, Gadaba and Bondo of Orissa: it is probably very common.

> 773 covered with the marks of disease, and they got married. Now these two, man and woman, had no knowledge of sex. They lived together working in their fields, but the man never went to his wife. Presently Mahapurub sent Lingo to see how they were getting on. 'They know nothing of love or copulation, they are living as brother and sister', so said Lingo. This made Mahapurub anxious about the peopling of the world. So he gave Lingo two pills filled with his love-charms to give them.
>
> When Lingo reached the house, he found the man had gone to hunt but the woman was bathing. He gave her the two pills and told her to eat one of them after the bath and to give the other to her husband when he returned. Having done this, Lingo went away. The woman ate one pill but was so pleased with it that she ate the second also, leaving nothing for her husband. Directly she swallowed the pills she was filled with excitement and passion and ran into the forest to seek her man.
>
> At last when he returned from hunting, instead of giving him his food she took him into the house and pulled him down to the ground beside her. But for all her caresses there was no desire in him and he did nothing. He ate a heavy meal but she could not eat. All night she tried to rouse him, but without success. Then once again Lingo came to see how they were. He peeped through the door and saw the woman trying to rouse her husband. So he brought two more pills and this time gave them one each. Now at last the husband's desire was awakened and he went to his wife again and again, but since the woman had a greater number of pills she was much the more passionate. That is why the Muria say women remain more passionate than men unto this day.
>
> So strong was their passion that the very next morning a child was born. After this, children were born throughout the world and men and women increased in number.

The stories go on to tell how Lingo brought the Muria to Bastar from Lanjhi-Dhamda and how the different clans came into being as they tried to cross over the great ocean that separated Dhamda from Bastar. He also taught the Muria how to worship Mother Earth.

> The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow. Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth.' 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her.' Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.[1]

XI. Lingo and the Sun and Moon

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821 Lingo is also, in some legends, connected with the creation of the sun and moon and the disposal of other heavenly bodies. In what appears to be the

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[1] Nanga Baiga was also taught to substitute animal for human sacrifice.—*The Baiga*, p. 315.

oldest Muria thought, Lingo, unlike such exclusively mundane cult-heroes as Nanga Baiga, has much to do with the heavens. Later on, he is often displaced by Bhimul Pen or Bhimsen. In Ulera the Muria told the following story.

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When this world was first made there was neither sun nor moon and the clouds and the earth were like husband and wife, they lay so close together.[1] Men were very small and had to move between them. They ploughed with rats and to pick brinjals they had to reach up as though they were getting mangoes from a tree. As they walked to and fro they used to knock their heads against the clouds.

Then Lingo and his brothers raised the clouds into the sky and there was room for men on earth, but there was no sun or moon and everything was dark. There was a tree called Huppe Piyer. When this tree blossomed it was day, when it dried up it was night. The twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers thought and thought how they could bring more light to the world. 'Where can we find something which will make light and darkness?' So thinking they came to the tree Huppe Piyer. 'This is what we want', they said and began to cut it down. It was so big that the twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers could cook their food and sleep in the space cut by their axes. When it was nearly cut through, it still did not fall for on the top of the tree sat the bird called Gara-surial-pite holding it up. Said Lingo to his brother, 'We must kill this bird', and Kosa Kana took his axe and killed it. Then the tree fell to the ground.

When the tree came down it fell on the thirteen Bhimul brothers and they shouted with fear. Lingo picked it up with one hand and threw it aside. Now this tree stood in the kingdom of twelve Rajas, and when these heard the noise they sent their police to see if the tree was safe. The police reported that someone or other had cut it down and the Rajas sent their soldiers to arrest the culprits. Lingo said to the soldiers, 'We have come to make two lanterns so that there may be light by day and light by night. We have done no evil'. So said Lingo. But the soldiers took no heed of what he said and attacked the brothers with their spears and swords. Lingo took all the blows in his own body and saved his brothers. Then he himself took his sword and fought and killed the soldiers. With their blood the tree became red, for its roots drank it up: Then the brothers stripped off the bark and cut the wood into two great circles.

They made the lower circle into the sun and the upper circle into the moon. The sun was as big as the kingdoms of the twelve Rajas, but the moon was smaller. When they were ready, the brothers wondered how to put into them a living soul. Mahapurub had a son. 'Only by killing Mahapurub's son and giving his blood to the sun and moon to drink will they become alive and be man and woman', so said Lingo. The brothers thought and thought how to catch Mahapurub's son, but at last Lingo said, 'I will catch him' and went to Porrobhum.

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[1] The same idea of the proximity of earth and sky has been recorded among the Santal.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 401; the Buna—M. N. Basu, *The Bunas of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1939), p. 84; the Birhor—Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 456; the Gond—R. V. Russell, *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XIII, p. 94; and the Khasi—Gurdon, op. cit., p. 193. Frazer quotes similar stories from Africa—J. G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), pp. 96 and 109. The legend is probably widely distributed.

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Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon
821 tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who
[524] keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'.

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles
[524] about the stars are common: '*Mesol hadeng pesalk*: the whetstone is covered with *mung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.'

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *dandai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

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[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Turi legends.

[2] Crooke, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 492 and 590; *The Baiga*, p. 334; Enthoven, *op. cit.*, pp. 58f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 346ff. Penzer has a useful summary in *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 82ff.

the lightning is the flash from his anvil. The thunderbolt is the hot slag he throws away.[1]

In Badgai the Muria said that the lightning was the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) playing in the sky. As she laughs, her teeth flash. When she laughs in the north, then comes the rain.

Lightning is useful to the world. Lightning warns us of rain and even brings the rain. When it strikes a plant or a tree the Muria collect the bark and burn it in their houses as a remedy against bugs and lice. The bark of a [278] tree struck by lightning is a valuable medicine in cases of delayed delivery.

Thunder is even more useful. It is caused either by the noise of the heavenly smithy or by Lingo or Bhimul dragging their water-skins across the sky. At Aturgaon the Muria said that thunder is the noise made when Mahapurub sits on one of the bullocks made by potters at the Pola festival and rides on it across the sky. In Dongrigura they said that 'Mahapurub goes out to work in his fields or to fetch wood. He sees a storm coming and jumps into his cart and drives hard for home. The rumble of the wheels is the thunder.[2] Mahapurub's iron axe or sickle falls down to the earth with a great crash. If people can find it, it is an invaluable cure for rheumatism or headache.' In Kokori the Muria added the detail that Mahapurub's cart is dragged by sterile women. There is generally the idea that thunder has a beneficial effect on sterility.

For the Muria call the thunderbolt, 'the seed'. In Palari they said, 'Thunder is very useful, it means that the heavenly semen is falling to earth; all the small sprouts of rice and the small vegetables on which this seed falls become pregnant and so bear good fruit.' In Karanji also the Muria said that rice, vegetables and trees only bear fruit after hearing thunder. If there is no thunder the crop is always poor. 'We know this must be so, for it is the same with hens. The hen must hear the cock crow, otherwise its eggs will not be fertile.' It is said that if a thunderbolt falls or lightning strikes the earth near a barren woman, she will soon become pregnant.

Here is another account, from Kokori. 'Bhimul is man; Earth is woman. When Bhimul is on heat, he tries to approach Earth. But there is no road or path, and he rushes about trying to find the way, he hurls rocks and mountains to and fro—and this makes the thunder. At last he can contain his seed no longer: it spurts out—and a thunderbolt falls. From this seed man gets his food. Unless Bhimul gets on heat there is no rain or harvest.'

Rain is described as the chaprasi of Mahapurub who goes ahead of him when he sets out on tour. The rainbow is Lingo's *agiaban*, or magic arrow of fire. The rain-giver is either Lingo or Bhimul. The people of the north-west generally beg rain from Lingo, for it is here that Lingo's cult is strongest. In the east they approach Bhimul. In Chikhli village at a time of drought in 1941, the Muria went to Lingo and offered him a bull, but he only gave them three days' rain. When they asked him why this was he said, 'In the old days the Raja himself honoured me with sacrifice, but now I am forgotten and so I am not giving rain'. In Markabera they had the curious notion that the first rain is the marriage of Mother Earth and the frogs come to make music for it. Frogs fall from the sky: if they fall into the water they remain frogs; if they fall into a field they turn into tortoises; if they fall under ebony trees they turn into hares.

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[1] In Bastar the Hindus say that during a thunderstorm the *titi* bird lies on its back with its feet in the air in order to protect the earth. Many Muria say the same.

[2] This is a common Hindu notion. Thunder is the voice of Indra, or the roar of the wheels of Bhagavan's chariot. See Enthoven, op. cit., p. 76.

821 I have heard hail described as 'the bones of the rain'. The rainbow is the great snake, Bhumtaras, that rises from its ant-hill to stop the rain.[1]

XII. Lingo and the Discovery of Fire

173 In Bastar, as in Hislop's version of the legend, Lingo is associated with the discovery of fire. In some villages it is said that the first fire to be kindled was that made by Lingo at the original Pus Kolang dance. At Kanhargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana the Jhoria Muria told this story:

> At the beginning of the world, when the earth sank beneath the great waters, there were no men left but the seven Koroho-Lingo brothers. When the water went down again, they set out to find fire to warm themselves and cook their food. Presently they saw a Maharin whose name was Parajunge; she had a fire. They made their camp near her house and went to get fire from her. The girl gave the eldest brother some fire in a bundle of grass but it went out. Then the next brother went, and the next, but every time the fire went out. At last Lingo himself went. When she offered him fire in the grass he hit her twice and picked up a burning log from her fire and took it to his camp.
>
> The brothers went away, but the girl soon found that she was pregnant from the two blows which Lingo had struck. The boy grew up, and when he was old enough he went with the other boys and girls to dance in Lingo's ghotul. Parajunge, his mother, followed him. Now Lingo was leading the dance with a tuft of palm leaves in his turban. When the dancers got tired they sat down to smoke and the boy said to his mother, 'All these other children have fathers, but where is my father?' Parajunge said, 'It is the one who is wearing leaves in his hair, go and catch him'. The boy caught him by the leg and cried, 'You are my father'. When the brothers heard it they were very angry with Lingo and said, 'We would have given you a kingdom, but he who makes a Maharin pregnant becomes a Mahara'. Lingo said, 'I never went to her, I only hit her and she became pregnant of her own accord'. They disputed this for many days and at last Lingo said, 'You may test me by oil and fire; make a great iron vessel and fill it with twelve pots of oil; put me in it and boil me on a hearth lit with twelve cart-loads of wood; if I am unhurt it will prove me innocent'. The brothers carried out the test and Lingo was unharmed; he sat in the fire playing his eighteen instruments. The brothers then believed Lingo and gave him the kingdom. The name of the boy was Son Kuar and he was admitted into the ghotul as a Muria, but they would not accept his mother.

In this account of how Lingo brought fire to the tribe, we may note the tradition that he got it from a woman and that the incident is vaguely connected with impregnation. Frazer has collected myths from many parts

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[1] The Hill Maria have the same idea. So have the Kol, who call the rainbow Lurbeng, the serpent—Dalton, op. cit., p. 177. The Pardhan of Mandla say it is the raised head of Basuk, the cobra who supports the world. The Bison-horn Maria call it Bhimul-vil, the bow of Bhimul—Grigson, op. cit., p. 230. The Baiga call it the house of Bhimsen—*The Baiga*, p. 336. Hindus generally call it the bow of Ram or of Indra, though they too speak of it as a snake. 'The rainbow is connected with the snake, being the fume of a gigantic serpent blown up from underground. In Persia, it was called the "celestial serpent".'—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 144.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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of the world, Australia, the Murray Islands, Melanesia, the Caroline Islands, South America, which represent women as being in possession of fire before men.[1]

We also see very clearly that the attempt to kill Lingo in the iron vessel was really, as I have already suggested, an ordeal of a type to which frequent reference is made in the literature of Indian antiquity.

XIII. Lingo and the Discovery of Liquor

In the east of the State, where Lingo's cult is weakest, he is still imagined as a simple, kindly, generous peasant. He is the giver of happiness; he is the honest ploughman working for his family, making furrows three miles long, guiding his plough with his son Netturgundi tied below his neck. He eats anything, stones or trees, rice or pulse, birds or monkeys. His hair reaches to heaven and his tail goes down to hell.

Once Lingo gave a great feast to mankind. As the guests were going home he sent a Nahar servant to listen to what they were saying about him. The servant heard them complaining that though the food was all right, they had been given 'nothing coloured to make them happy'. When Lingo heard this he said, 'Is there nothing in the jungle to make men happy?' This preyed on his mind and he went everywhere in the forest to search for happiness until he came at last to a great hollow mahua tree. The corollas had fallen into the hollow, rain had filled them with water, and they had fermented. Many maina birds gathered round to drink, and Lingo saw them 'cry loudly and dance'. So he took some of this drink home, and at his next feast gave it to his guests. This time they went home saying, 'Today Lingo has given us happiness'.

Nanga Baiga is said to have discovered liquor in almost exactly the same way.[2] The Bondo have a similar tale; so have the Savara of Koraput who attribute the great discovery to Bhimsen. The Sondi tradition is that Brahma created Suka Muni from the dirt between his eyebrows and authorized him to distil spirit from the *ippa* (mahua) flowers, which had hitherto been eaten by birds.[3]

Mahua spirit does not seem to be associated with the sexual passion, but there is a common belief that rice-beer and toddy were invented to ensure a proper increase of population. Tallur Muttai is said to have created the sago-palm so that its juice might stir the sluggish desires of Kadrengal.[4] In Ho tradition, the first man and woman never came together 'from their extreme simplicity' until Sing Bonga the Creator 'taught them the art of making rice-beer, the use of which caused them those sensations which were in due time the means of peopling the world'.[5] The Kol have the same belief.[6] The Santal say it was Lita, a traditional hero whose bow is the rainbow, who taught the first man and woman to make rice-beer and thus introduced sexual congress to the world.[7]

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[1] J. G. Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire* (London, 1930), p. 206.

[2] *The Baiga*, p. 311. 'There is a common belief that on occasions bears become intoxicated as a result of eating fermented flowers.' A. A. Dunbar Brander, *Wild Animals in Central India* (London, 1931), p. 7.

[3] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 356.

[4] See p. 54.

[5] Tickell, 'Memoir on the Hodesum' in *JASB*, New Series, Vol. IX, Part II (1840), p. 797. Compare Dalton, op. cit., p. 185, who observes that the old Mankis are fond of telling this story with all sorts of indecent details.

[6] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 508.

[7] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part IIIB, p. 109.

113 It is probable that further investigation might discover the cult-heroes of several other tribes credited with this achievement.

XIV. The Coming of Death

Death is a stranger in the world, alien and unnatural. The first men did not die. For long ages Lingo kept death away. But at last it came and the Muria have several legends to explain how. According to one story, it was a boon to counteract the misery of living for ever.

> In the old days the Muria did not die, yet could not keep their youth.
>
> They sat in the courts of their houses propped up with bits of wood; they could not use their hands or feet, and their gruel had to be poured into their mouths by their relatives. At last they went to Mahapurub and asked him to give them the gift of death. 'Do you want death for everyone', he asked, 'or only for yourselves?' 'For everyone', they replied. From that day both young and old have died.

Another tale attributes the coming of death to Mahapurub's need of souls to people his kingdom, an idea common also among the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces.[1]

> In Nadumbhum (the Middle World) no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she cried, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
>
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. When it fruited, some of the plums fell to the ground. She picked them up and ate and her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating the boy. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it, and from that day death has been in the world.

A different version of the same theme, from Palari, gives some interesting details about the creative process.

> At the beginning of the world men were very small; they ploughed with rats and had to pull down brinjals as if they were getting mangoes. The ground was so soft that you could fall through it down to Adibhum (the Lower World). In those days men could remove the tops of their heads, examine them for lice, and put them back again.[2]
>
> When the first men died, their neighbours took them out to burial, but the corpses got up and came back and sat in front of their houses. When the neighbours came in, they asked, 'Where have you been?' 'We've been out burying you.' 'What sort of folk are you? We were just sleeping and you carried us here and there. When we awoke we returned home.'[3]

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[1] *The Baiga*, p. 329.

[2] For a similar tradition among the Santal, see Bompas, op. cit., p. 401.

[3] The theory that death was originally of a temporary character is held by the Birhors—Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 252f., and I have recorded it among the Juang and Bhuiya of Keonjhar State.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

When Mahapurub heard of this, he wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He thought, 'I must stick the tops of their heads on; then they will certainly die'. He ground flour, mixed it with water into a paste and hid it. Then he went to see the first man and woman. 'What have you got inside your heads?' he asked. 'Do show me.' They removed the tops of their heads, and Mahapurub quickly smeared the edges with paste, muttering, 'Never come unstuck again'. When the first man and woman put the tops of their heads back, they stuck and soon afterwards people began to die.

And now for fear that the dead might come back again to their houses, the neighbours burnt their bodies and they never returned to life.

PART II
THE GHOTUL

[p.267]

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CHAPTER NINE

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

I. The Village Dormitory throughout the World

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THERE is nothing unusual or extraordinary about the ghotul; similar institutions are widely distributed throughout the world. One of the first writers in English to examine the 'communal barracks of primitive races', S. E. Peal, drew attention to the fact that 'from Bhutan to New Zealand and from the Marquesas to the Niger', the system existed and was distinguished by certain persistent features.

> Firstly, we see in all, except among the nomadic Australians, that there is a special and recognized building, or buildings, for the unmarried young men and lads to sleep in, and at times for the young women, also in many cases together.
>
> Secondly, we notice that among the races having these barracks without exception there is complete liberty between sexes until marriage.
>
> Thirdly, and most significant of all, these barracks are invariably tabu to the married women, whether the race or tribe is exogamic or endogamic.
>
> We may also note that, as a general rule, we see adult marriages where this social system is in vogue, and conjugal fidelity seems greater than among the more civilized races, by whom juvenile chastity is valued.[1]

The dormitories fall into two clearly defined groups—one, of the semi-military 'barracks' type, appears to aim at a strict segregation of the boys and is connected with war, hunting and magic; the other allows or even encourages them to have relations with the unmarried girls and possibly aims (though our knowledge is too fragmentary to assert this with confidence) at regulating the pre-nuptial interests of tribal youth. Both types of dormitory, like the Muria ghotul, fulfil important social and religious functions. Those of the first type are well summarized by Hutton Webster.

> The men's house is usually the largest building in a tribal settlement. It belongs in common to the villagers; it serves as council-chamber and town hall, as a guest-house for strangers, and as a sleeping resort of the men. Here the more precious belongings of the community, such as trophies taken in war or in the chase and religious emblems of various sorts are preserved. Within its precincts, women and children, and men not fully initiated members of the tribe, seldom or never enter. When marriage does not follow immediately upon initiation into the tribe, the institution of the men's house becomes an effective restraint upon the sexual proclivities of the unmarried youth. It then serves as a club-house for the bachelors, whose residence within it may be regarded as a perpetuation of that formal seclusion of the lads from the women, which it is the purpose of the initiation ceremonies in the first place to accomplish.
>
> An institution so firmly established and so widely spread may be expected to survive by devotion to other uses, as the earlier ideas which

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[1] S. E. Peal, 'The Communal Barracks of Primitive Races', *JASB*, Vol. LXI (1893), pp. 246ff.

> led to its foundation fade away. As guard posts where the young men are confined on military duty and are exercised in the arts of war, these houses often become a serviceable means of defence. The religious worship of the community frequently centres in them. Often they form the theatre of dramatic representations. In rare instances these institutions seem to have lost their original purpose and to have facilitated sexual communism rather than sexual separation. Among some tribes the men's house is used as the centre of the puberty initiation ceremonies. With the development of secret societies, replacing the earlier puberty institutions, the men's house frequently becomes the seat of these organizations and forms the secret 'lodge'.[1]

Haddon also emphasized the social importance of the men's house in Melanesia.

> Speaking in general terms, these places are tabooed to women and to the uninitiated, they are used as dwellings or meeting-places of the men, and in them various ceremonies are held; they constitute the social, political and religious centres in the public life of the men.[2]

Like the club-houses of New Guinea, says Haddon again, the *kwod* of the Torres Straits Islands was

> the central spot in the social, political and religious life of the men. After initiation, the young men could frequent the *kwod* and they habitually slept there and they had to look after the place, keep it in order, fetch water, collect firewood, attend to the fires, and in fact to do whatever the elder men required of them.[3]

Hutton Webster, whose book on primitive secret societies was written in 1908, believed that 'promiscuity, either before or after marriage, was the exception among primitive peoples', and that the exclusively male dormitories were the more primitive—the admission of women being a sign of deterioration and deviation from their main purpose. He says little about the girls' clubs or women's secret societies but observes that 'the admission of women is characteristic of the disintegration of secret societies'.[4] Many primitive peoples are undoubtedly, just as the Muria are, examples to the whole world for marital fidelity, but it is worthy of note that it is just those observers who have spent most time and studied most dispassionately, who have been convinced of the general pre-nuptial sexual freedom of their people. The entertaining, if acrimonious, debates between Westermarck and Briffault on this point would have more finality if we could trust the authorities on which they base their arguments. But even Westermarck, who inclines to stress the limitations that primitive people put on promiscuity, admits the very general freedom, only pointing out that this freedom cannot be used as an argument that a stage of promiscuity preceded marriage. He adds that sometimes this freedom is due to contact with civilized races, and that pre-nuptial freedom does not mean that a girl can always be changing her lovers without reproach, but that rather in their love affairs boys and girls often reflect the constancy of their elders.[5] We shall see presently that among the Muria this was probably the case in the older ghotul and that promiscuity is a definite feature of modern and more sophisticated times.

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[1] Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), pp. 1f.

[2] A. C. Haddon in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits* (Cambridge, 1904), Vol. V, p. 3.

[3] Ibid., p. 365.

[4] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 121.

[5] E. Westermarck, *Three Essays on Sex and Marriage* (London, 1938), pp. 223f.

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I stress this because it is essential that we do not approach our study of the village dormitory with a belief that pre-nuptial sexual freedom is something unusual in the primitive world. Nor can I accept Hutton Webster's contention that the admission of girls to the dormitory is a sign of its degeneration. If there really was a desire to prohibit all sexual congress before marriage, it would be, but except for a few societies such a rule has not been established. Briffault points out that 'secret societies to which women are admitted are more generally prevalent in the remoter and more inaccessible districts of the interior of Africa and the Upper Congo, while exclusive men's societies flourish among the more sophisticated and less primitive coast tribes'.[1] Modern writers have thrown a great deal of new light on the real nature of the boys' clubs and girls' houses in Melanesia and elsewhere and have shown that there was a closer connexion between them than was once supposed, though even today we have not enough material for a complete picture.

I will now make a brief survey of the dormitory throughout the world, a survey which suggests—as Hodson says—that 'it would seem to be rather symptomatic of a definite level of culture than distinctive of any special ethnic group or groups'.[2] This is, of course, only a survey of samples but it will be sufficient to show that the Muria ghotul is nothing unusual or bizarre, but represents a genuine attempt of the human spirit at a certain stage of development to solve some of the psychological and social problems that even the most 'advanced' nations have not yet adjusted to their satisfaction.

Melanesia and New Guinea

Exclusively men's houses have been reported throughout Melanesia and New Guinea. 'In all the Melanesian groups', says Codrington, 'it is the rule that there is in every village a building of public character, where the men eat and spend their time, the young men sleep, strangers are entertained; where as in the Solomon Islands the canoes are kept; where images are seen, and from which women are generally excluded; the *kiala* of Florida, the *oha* of San Cristoval, the *madai* of Santa Cruz, the *tambu* house of traders, the *bure* of Fiji.'[3] In the Banks Islands, when a boy began to grow up, his parents sent him to the *gamal*, saying, 'He is a boy, it is time to separate him from the girls'.[4] The *eravo* of New Guinea seems to be very similar to the *kwod* of the Torres Straits. Both are described as having an educational purpose.[5] Seligman has given an account of the *marea* of the Mekeo District,[6] and Haddon of the bachelors' house among the cannibal Tugeri.[7] On Mailu Island there is a club-house for each clan in a village, and the dormitory is built between each clan-group of houses. The heads of enemies are placed here 'to look terrible'; spears and the regalia of war are hung up and raids are planned and celebrated. This is the *dubu*, where lads sleep from initiation to marriage.[1] The *tohes* of Santa Anna and San Christoval are said to be of great size and beauty; they serve as sanctuaries, and war canoes and the bones of warriors are kept in them. Boys are confined to the *tohes* for a year before initiation and then sleep there till marriage.[2] In the Loyalty Islands each village has a large dormitory, where the young men sleep with a few elders to look after them. It is called the *hnelmelom*.[3] Mrs Hadfield gives a few details about it. The house, she says, was strictly reserved for men: it served as a town hall 'and all important municipal councils were held there'. As in Bastar, it was considered improper for any boy to be absent: 'if any youth absented himself from this house and slept in the village he was recalled to a sense of the impropriety of such an action by hearing, in the early morning, a chorus of voices chanting his name, accompanied with many insulting insinuations as to the cause of his absence'.[4]

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[1] Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), Vol. II, p. 553n, where other arguments against Hutton Webster's view are given.

[2] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 75.

[3] R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 231. It is good to read Bishop Codrington declare (p. 235) that although 'considerable laxity of intercourse between boys and girls undoubtedly existed, and unchastity was not very seriously regarded, yet it is certain that in these islands generally there was by no means that insensibility in regard to female virtue with which the natives are so commonly charged'. But where an unmarried girl desired relations with a youth, she made the first advances, communicating her wishes to his paternal aunt. See W. H. R. Rivers, *History of Melanesian Society* (Cambridge, 1914), Vol. I, p. 39.

[5] See *Man*, Vol. V (1905), p. 3.

[6] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 226.

[7] A. C. Haddon, 'Kava-drinking in New Guinea', *Man*, Vol. XVI.

The Kiwai *darimu* of the Fly River area seems to be of the same type. It is often very large and is used by the unmarried boys or by the married when on ceremonial occasions they must sleep apart from their wives. The ghotul serves the same purpose. 'Broadly speaking, from the Dutch border eastwards society as a whole is based on an idea of a separation of the sexes, and brought to bed-rock, the whole system is probably based on war and fighting.' The *darimu* is associated with more or less secret ceremonies for the initiation and training of lads who are taught about their totems, the use of the bull-roarer and the mysteries of agriculture. At one point of the initiation ceremony 'a small wood carving of a naked woman is shown, and stated to be particularly favourable to a good supply of sago'.[5] In fact, 'essentially the *darimu* is for ceremonial purposes'. The building is charged with a store of magical 'heat'; its construction is attended by the constant application of magical medicines: it is dominated by great posts carved to represent human figures and of a strongly erotic character and the blood of enemies is smeared upon them. So impressive in the old days was the interior 'with all its paraphernalia of erotic ceremonies' that more than once strangers fainted when they went inside. A *darimu*, 'charged with magical power, is an efficient ally of the tribesmen when away on a fighting expedition, for it helps them from a distance'.[6]

The *ravi* is common in New Guinea from the Papuan gulf westwards: it is used as a men's club-house and is a centre of religious ritual. The *ravi* of the Purari Delta, says Raymond Firth, is 'a huge thatched house, fifty yards or so in length, built on piles and having as its most characteristic

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[1] W. J. V. Savile, *In Unknown New Guinea* (London, 1926), pp. 36 and 105. The missionary Savile is severe on Mailu 'morals': boys and girls chose their lovers freely and no girl went to her husband as a virgin. But Malinowski says that a girl who changed her lover too often was condemned, and there is the interesting parallel with Muria custom that if a boy wanted to marry a girl he avoided her and only if he did not desire marriage did intercourse take place. It is not clear, however, whether the love-affairs of the young people were associated in any way with the *dubu*. B. Malinowski, 'The Natives of Mailu', *Trans. R. Soc. South Australia*, Vol. XXXIX (1915), pp. 559-63.

[2] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 6.

[3] S. H. Ray, 'The People and Language of Lifu, Loyalty Islands', *JRAI*, Vol. XLVII (1917), p. 227.

[4] E. Hadfield, *Among the Natives of the Loyalty Group* (London, 1920), p. 42.

[5] W. N. Beaver, *Unexplored New Guinea* (London, 1920), pp. 183ff.

[6] G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), pp. 8f., 17, 21f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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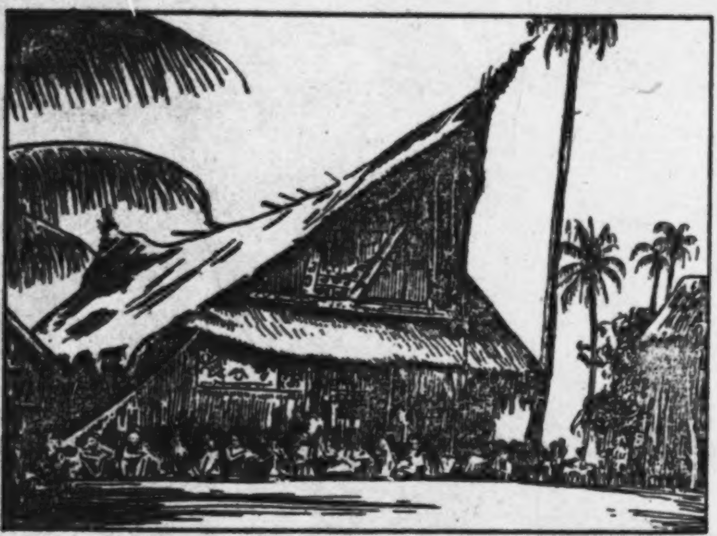
feature a high overhanging open gable which yawns like the gaping mouth of some primeval crocodile. The raising of the heavy main posts which bear the weight of the gable demands concentration of effort, organization of labour and engineering skill, and the owners of the house take pride in their size. A new post is often decorated with flowers and palm branches before it is set up. So much is a large post a testimony to the industrial qualities of the owners that, as F. E. Williams was once told, visitors to a *ravi* 'shed tears of jealousy on first clapping eyes on a new post which fronted it'.[1]



After a photograph by Parkinson, facing p. 269 in Max Schmidt's *The Primitive Races of Mankind* (Harrap)

FIG. 34. Men's house in Dallmanhafen, Melanesia

Many other such institutions exist, or have existed, in New Guinea and the Melanesian Islands under various names. They are all described as being forbidden to women and most as being associated with the warlike side of tribal life.

Such are the houses for men only, taboo to women. But this is not the whole picture: there are other houses which are represented as fulfilling the purpose of sexual initiation or as providing a place of temporary cohabitation. The youths' house in the New Hebrides is known as the *imeium*.

> All villages have special houses where all unmarried circumcised males live, and to this house comes at special seasons a girl known as the *iowhenua* whose special task it is to initiate the boys into the mysteries of sex. No man can contract a marriage who has not been initiated

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[1] Raymond Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London and New York, 1936), p. 25. F. E. Williams says that the Purari 'severely deprecated loose conduct in unmarried girls'. Yet 'there was certainly opportunity for sexual gratification placed before the young men'. *The Natives of the Purari Delta* (Port Moresby, 1924), pp. 243ff.

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> by the *iowhanan*, and a man may not be betrothed until he has been touched by her. There is no special ceremonial act in the touching and it is admitted that it is generally the prelude to connexion with the woman. There is no payment made to the woman for this service, but the village or tribe which furnishes her receives compensation. She is painted in a special manner as a sign of her profession and wears turtle-shell ear-rings and other ornaments, while a shorter skirt distinguishes her from other women. After a circumcision ceremony, the *iowhanan* is sent to live in the bachelors' house with the unmarried men, and while she is living there, the mothers of the young men with her take food for their sons, though their sisters are most rigorously kept away. The youths make use of the *iowhanan* while she is living with them, but when she is absent a period of abstinence prevails. After her services are no longer required she returns to her village and later makes a good marriage, for there seems to be no ill feeling against her.[1]

The relation between the boys' and girls' houses of the Wagawaga of British New Guinea has been discussed by Seligman.

> Certain houses are dedicated to the use of unmarried girls above the age of puberty who habitually pass the night in them. These, like the local man-houses, are called *potuma*, and are usually old houses which, when their owners build new ones, are given over to the girls. The girls resort to these houses in the dusk, and after dark a number of young bachelors will proceed to such a *potuma*, and with the exception of one of their number, squat down outside.
>
> This youth enters the house and asks the girls if any of them are willing to receive any of the boys whose names he repeats. If one of the latter finds favour the girl says, 'All right, you tell him byemby he come'. Usually each girl selects a partner, and after finding out which girls want companions, the ambassador comes out and tells the boys which of them have been selected; the latter resort to the *potuma*, while the unchosen remainder may proceed to another girl-house and there go through the same programme. In each *potuma* the evening is spent in singing and yarning, but it is understood that in most cases connexion will follow. Each couple goes to sleep together, but without discarding petticoat and perineal band; when a boy wakes up and sees that the others are asleep he has connexion with his partner.[2]

There are points of resemblance here, especially in the girls' privilege of choosing their partners, which recall the Muria ghotul. With the *bukumatula* of the Trobriand Islands there are still further points of resemblance and difference. The *bukumatula* was established, says Malinowski, because 'the lasting liaisons of youths and adult girls require some special institution, definitely established, physically comfortable, and at the same time having the approval of custom'. In every Trobriand village, therefore, there are houses—there may be as many as thirty in a single village—in which 'a limited number of couples, some two, three, or four, live for longer or shorter periods together in a temporary community. Such houses also and incidentally offer shelter for younger couples if they want amorous privacy for an hour or two'.

The houses are simply furnished with bunks covered with mats. Since they are only used for sleeping, they are 'strikingly bare. They lack the feminine touch, the impression of being really inhabited'. Each boy owns his own bunk and regularly uses it. 'When a couple dissolve their liaison,

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[1] C. B. Humphreys, *The Southern New Hebrides* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 45.
[2] Seligman, op. cit., p. 500.

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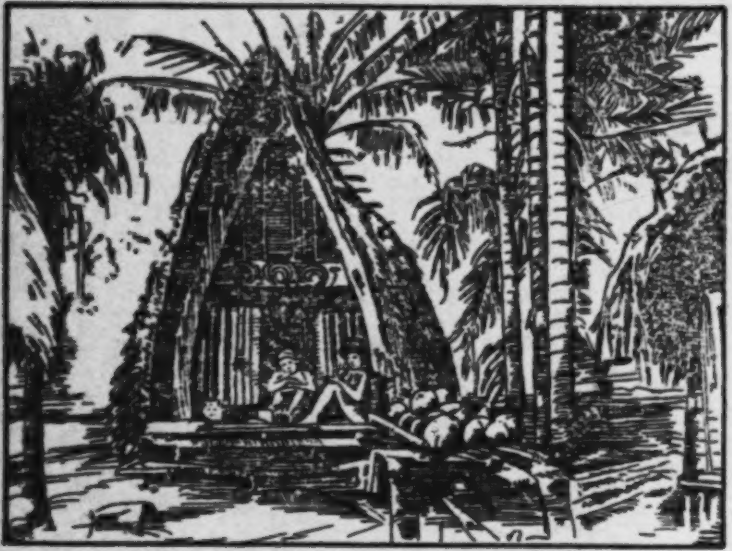

After a photograph facing p. 59 in B. Malinowski's
The Sexual Life of Savages (Routledge)

FIG. 35. A decorated bachelor's house in the Trobriand Islands

it is the girl who moves, as a rule, to find another sleeping-place with another sweetheart.' But the pairs of lovers remain, at least for the time being, strictly faithful to one another; there is never an exchange of partners; 'in fact a special code of honour is observed within the *bukumatula*, which makes an inmate more careful to respect sexual rights within the house than outside it'.

Malinowski summarizes the characteristics of the *bukumatula* as being '(1) individual appropriation, the partners of each couple belonging exclusively to one another; (2) strict decorum and absence of any orgiastic or lascivious display; (3) the lack of any legally binding element; (4) the exclusion of any other community of interest between a pair, save that of sexual cohabitation'.[1]

Between the *bukumatula* and the ghotul there are obvious resemblances (particularly the decorum and lack of any legally binding element) with the individual appropriation characteristic of the *jodidar* ghotul. But the one great central ghotul house, heart of a hundred religious and social interests, carefully organized and disciplined, is fundamentally different from the Melanesian institution.

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[1] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. 59.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Polynesia and Micronesia

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Throughout Polynesia and Micronesia the men's house is widely distributed, sometimes existing for the purpose of sexual segregation, sometimes—as in the case of the notorious Areoi—developing into a secret society, occasionally promoting the cohabitation of the boys and girls. Hutton Webster quotes from missionary reports severely condemning the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* of the Marianne Islands. The Uritoi are described as young men who desired to live with girls without engaging themselves in the bonds of marriage; they had a mysterious language which they used principally for amorous songs; they lived together in dormitories to which their parents urged them to go.[1] This sounds not unlike the Trobriand *bukumatula*. Of the Ti or bachelor's hall in the Marquesas, studied by Herman Melville in 1847, Peal says, 'The absence of marriage except in a rudimentary (endogamic) form, the complete sexual liberty, utter ignorance of modesty, and remarkable development of the Ti, or barracks tabu to women, are as singular as the general happiness and plenty, absence of sickness and crime'.[2]

In the Pelew Islands the young men formed themselves into clubs called *kaldebekel* and built dormitories called *bai*. A youth was regarded as only a guest in his parents' house; his real home was the *bai*, and he was not supposed to spend the night with his mother and father. In each *bai* there were one or more *armengol*, unmarried girls, who were the temporary property of the boys.[3] An early authority, Captain C. Bridge, says that 'a few women from neighbouring villages frequent' the dormitories. 'It is not considered *comme il faut* for a woman to enter one in her own village. If she did she would become an outcaste; going into one a mile or two off, however, in no way affects her position.'[4] In the Carolines three or four unmarried girls called *mespil* were kept in the club houses 'whose business it was to minister to the pleasures of the men of the particular clan to which the building belonged'. Each man took his turn by rotation with them. This was 'an ordeal or preliminary trial to fit them for the cares and burden of maternity'. Afterwards the *mespil* could marry and there was no harm in it. Sometimes another village carried off a *mespil*, but this was thought very improper.[5] This arrangement appears to resemble that in the *imieum* of the New Hebrides, but it is possible that the situation has been misunderstood by our authorities; it is a subject on which the most detailed research is needed.

Peal considered that the 'bachelors' barracks' spread from Polynesia to New Zealand, and quotes a report that it was known there as the *wharee matoro*, 'the sleeping-place of the young men, and often of the young women too. *Wharee* means "house" and *matoro* is the advance made by women towards the other sex. These *wharee* were also the places where the village guests were entertained. Sexual intercourse between the young and unmarried was quite unrestrained in former times'.[6]

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[1] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

[2] Peal, *JASB*, Vol. LXI, p. 261, quoting H. Melville, *Narrative of a four months' residence in the Typee Valley of Nukuhiva, one of the Marquesas, in 1847*.

[3] On the Pelew Islands Kubary is our chief authority. He is quoted by Hutton Webster.

[4] *Proc. RGS*, Sept. 1886, p. 549.

[5] See F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands* (London, 1899), pp. 288ff, and *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899), p. 124.

[6] Peal, op. cit., p. 258.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

The Far East

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The Jakun of Malaya appear to have the same desire as the Muria to prevent their children witnessing the 'primal scene'. 'As soon as signs of approaching puberty appear in their children, the Jakun arrange for them to sleep apart. On land, the boy slept in a separate part of the hut, or in the first part of the boat if he was on water.'[1] So too Low, who was Colonial Secretary at Labuan, says of the Hill Dyak of Sarawak that 'so strict are these people in encouraging virtue amongst their children, that the young and unmarried men are not permitted to sleep in the houses of their parents, after having attained the age of puberty, but occupy a large house, of peculiar construction, which is set apart for their use in the village'.[2] Just how this arrangement promoted 'virtue' is not explained.

The Battak of Sumatra have a *sopo* dormitory, to which women are admitted and it is said that they sit there to ply their daily task of weaving. 'In the central parts of Celebes the men's house is known as the *loho*. In Flores it is called *romaluli*, in the Kei Islands *roemah kompani*, in Timor *umalulik*. In each village of Formosa there are one or more *palanghans*, large enough to hold all the boys who have reached the age of puberty and are still unmarried.'[3]

The men's house is also said to be found among the Moi of Annam and the Kha of Siam. Baudesson says that its aim is to prevent sexual relations between the young men and the unmarried girls, but since he adds that 'the Moi seem to attach no importance to female chastity' it hardly appears to succeed in its object.[4]

The Philippines

The difficulties of studying this subject, and the contradictions in our records, are nowhere more clearly illustrated than by the many diverse statements that have been made about the *olag* or girls' house maintained by the Igorot of Luzon in the Philippine Archipelago. Hutton Webster[5] lists the Igorot *pabafunan* among his exclusively male clubs—'it is the man's club by day and the unmarried man's dormitory by night'—but he makes no reference to the boys' relations with the girls in the *olag*, though he must have known of them since he refers to Jenks' ethnographic survey of the tribe.[6] Westermarck[7] quotes Chamisso (who, as Briffault acidly remarks, 'spent nearly a week in Manila'[8]) as well as Meyer and Blumentritt to prove that some of the independent tribes of the Philippines, including the Igorot of Luzon, 'held chastity in great honour, not only in the case of women, but also in the case of young girls, and protected it by severe laws'.[9] Briffault shows that Meyer and Blumentritt both based their opinion on a passage in a pamphlet by Lillo de Garcia which runs as follows:

> As soon as the children attain puberty, both boys and girls are completely isolated. In each village there are two large houses; the maidens

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[1] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, p. 86.

[2] H. Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), p. 247. See also p. 281.

[3] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 8, where all references are given.

[4] H. Baudesson, *Indo-China and its Primitive Peoples* (Translation, London, 1919), p. 45.

[5] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 9.

[6] A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manila, 1905).

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1925), Vol. I, p. 146.

[8] R. Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 49.

[9] Westermarck, op. cit., p. 146.

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spend the night in one of them and the boys in the other. With the latter an old man, and with the former an old woman act as overseers and take care that no one shall slip in or out of the houses during the night.

Briffault further quotes de Garcia as saying that so strict is the continence enforced on Igorot girls that, being unable to control their passions, they go into the woods and have connexion with monkeys.[1]

Westermarck makes no reference at all to the *olag*, though it is hard to understand how it was possible to discuss pre-nuptial sexual relations among the Igorot without doing so. It is only when we turn to Jenks' remarkable study —which was written before both Hutton Webster and Westermarck—that the situation becomes clarified.

Jenks points out that Blumentritt completely misunderstood the aim of the *olag* whose purpose 'is as far from enforcing chastity as it well can be. The old women never frequent the *olag*'.[2] Girls are sent to their dormitory at an early age, and though the boys have a separate house they are free to visit them. The girls themselves entice the boys; sometimes a girl steals a boy's pipe, cap or breeches, and he has to come at night to recover his property. 'Marriage', says Jenks, 'never takes place prior to sexual intimacy, and rarely prior to pregnancy.' Though a boy may be sexually intimate with one, two, three, or even more girls at the same time, 'a girl is almost invariably faithful to her temporary lover'.

Briffault claims that the girl's faithfulness to one lover at a time is regarded by Jenks with scepticism and as inconsistent with the whole conduct of the *olag*. Westermarck admits his acquaintance with Jenks' work[3] but never explains how he could make such high claims for the chastity of Igorot girls in spite of the institution of the *olag* where, as Jenks says again, 'there is no such thing as virtue, in our sense of the word, among the young people after puberty'.

Finally, Jenks' opinion is confirmed thirty-six years later[4] by R. F. Barton who took a rather severe view of Igorot promiscuity.

> This whole mountain country has an institution that has been called 'trial marriage'. The unmarried from the age of three or four years up, sleep at communal dormitories for each sex. The older boys make nocturnal calls on their sweethearts in the girls' dormitories. Inmates and amorous swains used to carry a torch of pitch pine to light their way over the precipitous village paths. But now there isn't any more pitch pine, so every youth has a flashlight and so have most of the girls. The flashlight came just in time to save the Igorot's peculiar institution.

The wheel has come full cycle. What was regarded by Hutton Webster as a means of segregating the boys of the tribe and as a social centre of male life, is now described as something entirely concerned with sex.

The following account, however, based on Jenks, of the dormitories of the Bontoc Igorot, summarizes the established facts. The boys sleep in the *pabafunan* or *fawi*, which is taboo to women, and in the day is the club of all the men. This visible exponent of tribal institutions 'is a building forbidden to women, the functions of which are several: it is a dormitory for men—generally unmarried men—a council house, a guard house, a guest house for

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[1] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 50.
[2] Westermarck, *Three Essays on Sex and Marriage*, p. 239.
[3] Jenks, op. cit., pp. 66ff.
[4] R. F. Barton, 'The Igorots Today' in *Asia*, June 1941.

Bison-horn Maria

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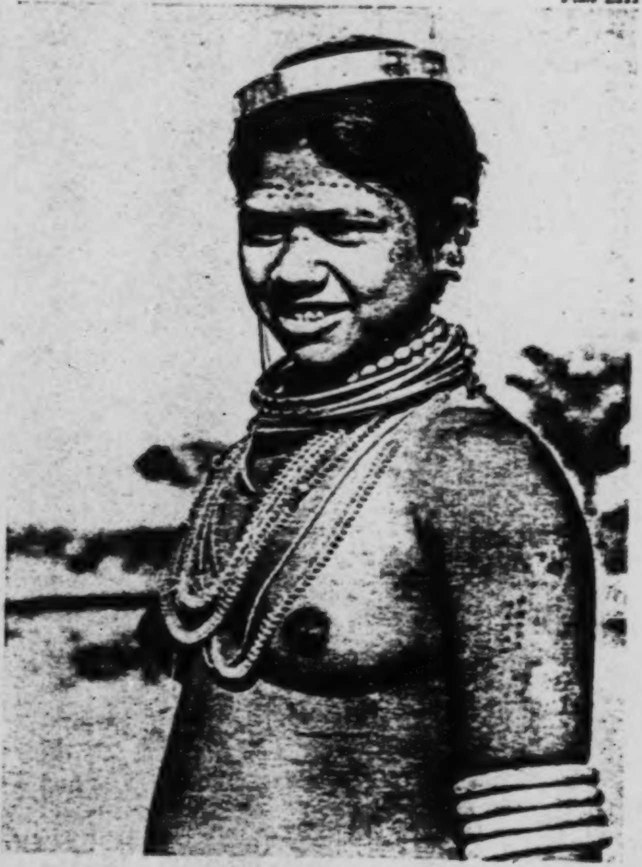
Plate LIII



Bison-horn Maria girl from Gudra,
Bastar State

[p. 278 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32

Bison-Horn Maria

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516

Hirme, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

[p. 278 (R)]

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men, a centre for ceremonials of the group, and a resting place for the trophies of the chase and war—a "head house"'.[1]

For the girls there is the *olag*, generally a small stone and mud-walled structure, in which a grown person can hardly stand, with a very small door. It is only used at night and over the floor are boards which serve as beds for the girls: these are put very close together on a frame about one foot above the ground. Although girls may not go to the *fawi*, boys go freely to the *olag* and are entertained there by their lovers. Indeed 'the *olag* is the mating place of the younger people of marriageable age'.[2] A married man does not usually visit it, though he may if a former lover is there unmated. But 'a man whose wife is pregnant seldom visits the *olag*, because he fears that, if he does, his wife's children will be prematurely born and die'.[3]

Jenks calls the *olag* 'an institution of trial marriage'[4] and says that when one of the girls becomes pregnant 'she at once joyfully tells her condition to the father of the child, as all women desire children'. Even if he does not marry her, she does not find it difficult to get another husband 'since her first child has proved her power to bear children'.[5] I have found a similar idea in Bastar. As in Bastar also, the Igorot have no puberty rites—and Jenks explains this by the fact that the *olag* is 'an institution calculated to emphasize the fact and significance of puberty'.

There are similar parallels between the Ifugao *agamang* and the Bastar tradition. 'From the time he is physically independent (four to seven years) a child sleeps in a dormitory for the unmarried. This may be a vacant house or the house of a widow, widower, or unmarried person. The *agamang* for boys contains only boys and bachelors, the girls' *agamang* is always mixed, the inmates being little girls, large girls and their lovers, old women, widows (including divorcees) and their lovers if any.'[6] For at puberty or soon after, the boy begins to visit the mixed *agamang*. Considerable light is thrown on 'the heedless and promiscuous' sexual relations of the dormitory in the autobiographies collected by R. F. Barton. 'If pregnancy results from a liaison there, marriage follows as a matter of course. It is inconceivable to the Ifugao that a boy should not marry the mother of his child unless there should be doubt about the paternity.' Marriage, however, as in Bastar is generally arranged by the parents.

Barton, impressed by the promiscuity of *agamang* relationships, considers that 'Ifugao youths are utter strangers to adolescent love' and indeed questions whether love, 'as we understand it', can exist apart from monogamy. But Muria experience in the ghotul shows clearly that love can co-exist with considerable freedom in sexual relations.

In the Ifugao boys' dormitory, says Barton, 'masturbation and sexual perversions are absent—at least I am sure about the latter. There is no word for either'.

America

Village dormitories are found in many parts of South America. The Bororo of Brazil have a highly organized men's house or *bahito*.[7] After a boy has been weaned, which is said to be delayed to the fifth or even the seventh

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[1] Jenks, op. cit., p. 32.
[2] Ibid., p. 66.
[3] Ibid., p. 67.
[4] Ibid., p. 33.
[5] Ibid., p. 66.
[6] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), pp. 9ff. and many references to the institution throughout the book.
[7] V. Fric and Paul Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 388.

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year, he enters the *bahito* and henceforward only occasionally visits his parents. The dormitory serves as a school where the children are taught spinning, weaving, the manufacture of weapons and singing. Every evening the local chieftain goes to the *bahito* and sings his commands for the following day, inspiring the boys with his accounts of hunting trips and perilous journeys. It is not clear how far girls share the life of the *bahito*, but there is some evidence that at a certain time of the year, a feast takes place in the *bahito* at which the young men steal the virgins and keep them in their dormitory. But since this is only done to girls who have no parents, the practice cannot be very common. If a Bororo suspects his wife of infidelity he puts her at the disposal of the young men in the *bahito*, but Fric says that he never saw more than two such women in any village.

Hutton Webster says that in Mexico and Central America the men's house was found among some of the tribes still living in a primitive condition, but most of the instances he gives are of secret societies or village clubs, not real houses of youth. The *celpule* of Guatemala, however, was probably a real boys' dormitory, and Hutton Webster quotes Herrera as describing it as a sort of college 'where four hundred youths chosen by the Prime Men resided'. These boys were trained in all the arts of war. Herrera gives a curious account of their relations with women.

> These men were authoriz'd to stand in the Market, and if any Woman brought with her a Maiden Daughter, above twelve Years of Age, they ask'd the Mother, why she did not marry that Girl? She gave what reason she thought fit; the young Man reply'd, It is now Time for her to breed, and not to spend her Time in vain, carry her to the House of the young Batchelors, and he appointed the Time. . . . Then she carry'd the Girl, whom the Youth kept one Night, and deflower'd; if he lik'd, he took her to Wife, departed the College, and went home to live with her, and another was put into the College in his Stead. If he did not like, he restor'd her to the Mother, ordering that she should be marry'd and multiply.[1]

Africa

In Africa, where the dormitory is reported of many tribes, it seems to have arisen partly as a guard-room and training centre for young warriors, and partly to save parents from the embarrassing presence of grown-up children in small houses. Basuto boys live in a separate building and have to perform social duties. The Wigendo of the Hehe-Bena-Sangu peoples of East Africa served as the chief's bodyguard and were treated 'like pupils in a school', receiving instruction in war, sex and deportment.[2] Unyamwesi boys eat and sleep in their *iwanza*, and dance in the open space before it. The men's house is said to have existed in the Congo among the East Manyema and Mogwandi, among the Wapokomo of East Africa, the Yaunde and other tribes of the Cameroons and the Mandingo of the Western Sudan.[3] Bari children of both sexes sleep in their parents' hut when quite young, in the goat-houses with the goats when a little older, and near puberty the boys build themselves a hut and live together.[4]

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[1] A. de Herrera, *General History of America, commonly called the West Indies.* Translated by Stevens (London, 1740), Vol. IV, p. 127. Quoted by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 16.

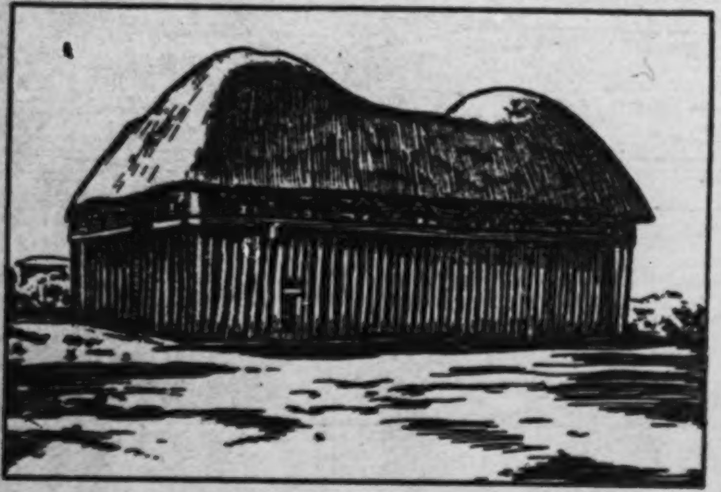
[2] W. B. Mumford, 'The Hehe-Bena-Sangu Peoples of East Africa', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVI (New Series), p. 212.

[3] Hutton Webster, op. cit., pp. 128.

[4] C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, 'The Bari', *JRAI*, Vol. LVIII (1928), p. 415.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

The Bawenda *tondo* is a school for the young men. It is an oblong fortress-like walled enclosure near the entrance to the chiefs' kraal which is used also as a guard-house. Here boys are 'made men' and used as the chiefs' bodyguards. No stranger is admitted. Inside is a little round shed containing fetishes. The boys are shown these, but are bound to secrecy. They are taught etiquette, to bear pain, to be brave in war. The girls are trained separately. But after the boys and girls have completed their separate training, they attend together a *domba* school where they are taught about marriage and child-birth. There are symbolic plays and on the last day of their training they do a python dance all night. In the morning a ceremonial coitus is performed beneath a blanket by a pair of initiates.[1]



After a photograph by B. Ankermann facing p. 321 in Max Schmidt's *The Primitive Races of Mankind* (Harrap)

FIG. 36. Men's house of the Bamum

When Lugwari boys and girls reach the age of about eight years they are put into the sleeping-huts called *adroso*, separate from their parents. When several families live close together, these houses are often built communally and placed in the centre of the cluster. Children of both sexes sleep together in the *adroso*.[2] Among the Kipsiki or Lumbwa tribe of Kenya Colony, unmarried boys on attaining puberty sleep, if their father is alive, in the *sigiroinet*. 'Each youth has a sweetheart in particular, with whom he sleeps from time to time; if she is a virgin, he respects her virginity for years while sleeping with her. A number of youths and girls may sleep in one hut. There are no indecencies.'[3]

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[1] E. Gottschling, 'The Bawenda', *JAI*, Vol. XXXV (1905), p. 372. See also H. A. Stayt, *The Bavenda* (Oxford, 1931).

[2] R. E. McConnell, 'Notes on the Lugwari Tribe of Central Africa', *JRAI*, Vol. LV (1925), p. 451.

[3] J. Barton, 'Notes on the Kipsikis', *JRAI*, Vol. LIII (1924), p. 66.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Emin Pasha recorded that 'a peculiar custom' prevailed among the Madi and their neighbours, the Shuli. Buildings raised above the ground are scattered about among the houses of the village. They are very like large granaries, but have in the front an oval doorway, and are smoothly plastered with clay. As soon as signs of puberty arrive, the girls sleep in these huts, and boys who have reached maturity have free access to them. Should a girl become pregnant, the youth who has been her companion is bound to marry her, and to pay her father the customary price of a bride.[1]

The Bweni of the Bondei country are said to have a dormitory where boys and girls 'too old to stay in their father's house for obvious reasons' live and sleep. Bedsteads are the only furniture; the children appear to be excused ordinary household duties. The mothers supply firewood, each one piece. 'As far as I can discover', writes the missionary Dale, 'it is never the custom for the boys and girls to enter each other's rooms. In the morning they may do so, but not one or two. Half a dozen may for the sake of a gossip. If one does do so, he is called *mvungwizi*—one who opens the door by night when people are asleep.'[2]

The Nandi, however, allow sexual relations in the dormitory. Unmarried warriors sleep, perhaps ten at a time, in a separate hut. 'Unmarried girls are allowed to visit the warriors in these buildings, staying with them for a few days at a time and living with them in a state of free love.' No married women are admitted, and when the warriors are away the girls look after the hut.[3]

But perhaps the most interesting of such institutions in Africa, and one about which we are fortunate enough to have a full and detailed account, is the *manyatta* of the Masai.[4] During their time of service in the warrior class the members of each Masai age-group live in special villages built away from the main married men's villages which are called *manyatta*. A *manyatta* consists of a number of huts each one of which is built, and lived in, by the mother (or another married woman relative) of one of the warriors. The elder women, who are accompanied by their children and especially by the warriors' uninitiated sisters and half-sisters, are there to work for the youths; the girls attend chiefly as their companions and lovers. A girl can only live in the *manyatta* if she has a brother there, and each young warrior is expected to bring two or three of his sisters who should if possible be fairly grown up.

The huts for the warriors are not divided into rooms. At one end, not screened off in any way, is the bed of the mother and her children. At the other end, equally unscreened, is the bed on which the warriors and their girls sleep together. The warriors give a general invitation, but it is a girl's privilege to choose her warrior for the night. No warrior sleeps in his own mother's hut, but arranges to go to one of the other huts and calls the girl to

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[1] *Emin Pasha in Central Africa* (London, 1888), p. 103. Quoted by J. G. Frazer *The Native Races of Africa and Madagascar* (London, 1938), p. 323.

[2] G. Dale, 'An Account of the Natives inhabiting the Bondei Country', *JAS*, Vol. XXV (1896), pp. 181ff.

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 16. Hutton Webster says that the Fang of the French Congo have a similar institution, but the authority he gives—A. L. Bennett, 'Ethnographic Notes on the Fang', *JAI*, Vol. XXIX (1899), pp. 66ff.—suggests rather that the abang is simply a palaver house.

[4] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX (1930), pp. 192ff. The Masai, says J. Thomson, 'live in a very indescribable manner till they are married'. *Proc. RGS*, Dec. 1884, p. 701. See also S. L. and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai* (London, 1901), pp. 70–4 and A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 122, 310–11.

Bhuiya AW28

Plate LV

Mask worn by Bhuiya youths on ceremonial expeditions

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Girl member of the Bhuiya dormitory at Reuta

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Bhuiya dormitory at Raisua

[p. 282(a)]

Kharia AW36

Plate LVI

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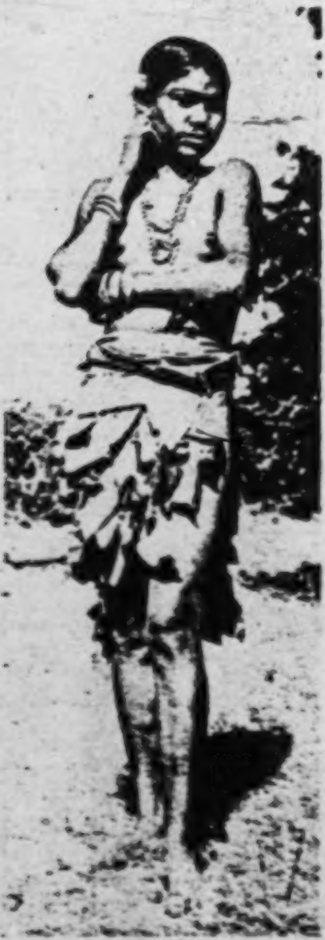

Juang dhangri at Kantara

[p.282(B)]

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him there. Several warriors generally sleep with their girls on the big bed, and there may be younger girls also with them.

'No girl may sleep with a man except she be absolutely nude, but on the other hand, although she may not refuse an invitation to sleep with a man, she is not necessarily expected to allow him full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so.' Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyatta* countless times.

'Besides the casual day-to-day lovers described above a girl has very often a more permanent lover in her *manyatta* chosen from the ranks of those who have been her casual lovers.' There is a public ceremony of choosing, and in some cases the couple ultimately marry, 'but this is *not* usual, as nearly every Masai girl is betrothed during childhood, and usually girls are quite content to marry those to whom they were thus betrothed. Should a girl be unwilling to marry the man to whom she is betrothed she usually contrives to become pregnant by her "permanent lover" and to persuade him to marry her'. We shall notice a similar habit among the Muria; in those ghotul which allow it, marriage between 'permanent lovers' is comparatively rare; but where a deep and lasting love exists, a chelik may do his best to make his motiari pregnant in order to break the matrimonial arrangements that have been made for them.

Among the Tanala, a hill tribe of Madagascar, when the eldest child in a family reaches fifteen or sixteen, even if not mature, the father builds it a separate house to the east of his dwelling. Girls use this as a work-room and receive their friends there, but sleep in the house. The boys all live together and only eat at home. The Tanala explain the institution as a defensive measure of the parents to avoid the nuisance of visitors. Girls are said to avoid intercourse before marriage, as early intercourse and promiscuity may lead to sterility. But 'premarital chastity on the part of a man would be taken as a confession of impotence and would make it difficult for him to find a wife'.[1]

Assam

The village dormitory in Assam has importance as a guard-house, a centre of social and religious activities, a school for the young men and a factor in the clan-organization of the tribe. 'There can be no doubt', says C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'that the men's house system is a very ancient institution. The rôle which the *morung* plays in the villages of the Konyaks shows how deeply it is rooted in their social organization, and since the Konyaks seem to represent an older type of Naga culture than any of the other tribes, it appears most probable that the *morung* belongs, together with the log-drum, to the oldest cultural stratum of the Naga Hills.'[2] We are fortunate in having many excellent accounts of the peoples of Assam by competent observers and our knowledge of the men's house there is more detailed and exact than that of other parts of the world.

One of the earliest accounts is in John Butler's *Sketch of Assam*, published in London in 1847. I do not know what reliance can be placed on Butler's remarks, but I quote a passage, which contains one very strange circumstance, because it was first in the field.

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[1] R. Linton, *The Tanala*, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Vol. XXII (1933), pp. 296f.

[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas', *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), p. 378.

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> On attaining the age of nine or ten years the boy is called a Moorungea, and from that time no longer resides with his parents, but, with all the youths of the village, takes up his abode at the Moorung, a large building set apart for this especial purpose. The parents, however, still continue to provide him with food, and he is obedient to their will, assisting them in cultivating their fields. . . The girls all live together, like the boys, in a separate Moorung, or house allotted for them; sometimes they reside in a house in which a corpse is kept, probably from the greater sanctity such an inmate would confer on their habitation.[1]

Another early account of the dormitories in Assam is by Peal who in the early months of 1882 made an expedition up the Dihing basin to Dapha Pani. He sketched a girls' house at a small Singphu village called Jagon. Peal distinguishes two types of *morung*—

> the *deka morang*, of the grown young men, who also act as guards, their houses being often on the outskirts or outlets of a village, and the little boys' *morang*, where they all sleep together, and are under certain laws or regulations of their own. In some villages as among the Bor Duria Naga there are as many as ten and twelve *deka morang*, several boys' *morang*, and three or four for the unmarried girls. Incautious or abrupt questions regarding these latter, especially by strangers are apt to produce denial or evasions, as these hill men well know that our ideas of chastity are not theirs. But at times they speak out plainly. Lately a Bor Duria Naga who was giving me a list of his village *morang*, in reply to my query as to whether the young men went to the girls' *morang*, said '*Na pai, na pai, dinot na pai*', not in the day, they would be ashamed, but after dark after all had eaten, then they went and all had great fun, it was their custom.
>
> Among all these tribes this is more or less the custom, and we may truly say their chastity begins with marriage, juvenile chastity is not the rule, but the exception.
>
> As we see the custom about us, it generally appears that the unmarried have to sleep away from the parents' house, at times only the boys and young men, at others the young women and girls also, but in this case they have different houses, though all are called by the Assamese *morang*. Among the Bordurias, Mutons, Banparas, Jobokas, Sanglois, and the tribes near, they are called Pa (*pah*); west of the Diku river I hear these morangs are called *Arim*, and there are different tribal names for them among the Singphu, Mishmi, Miri, and others, on the north or river bank of the Brahmaputra; attached to them are I hear fixed rules or laws, which it would be most interesting to collect and collate, and which may doubtless yield a clue to their origin. Viewing the '*morang*' as a phase of social evolution, it is probable that we have here before us one phase or form of the transition from original sexual liberty to our institution of marriage and modern ideas of chastity.
>
> The idea that sexual fidelity begins with marriage is here obvious, and almost implies that the institution began by capture, or purchase, giving a pair the right to live separate, as has been urged by many. A curious feature of the case confirmatory of this, is, that sexual infidelity by the female after marriage seems rare, much more so than among

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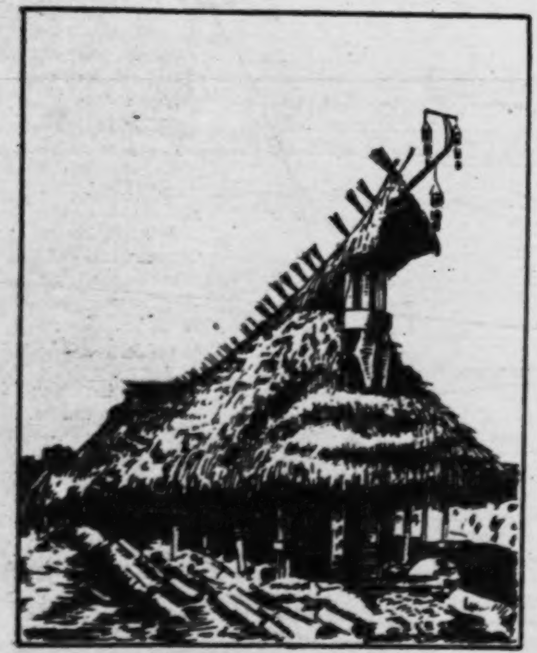
[1] John Butler, *A Sketch of Assam, with some Account of the Hill Tribes* (London, 1847) p. 164.

civilised communities. At this Jagon village there was only one *morung* and that for girls, the allusions to it I heard when we were returning were unmistakable.[1]

The *morung* of the Chang, Yimsungr and Sangtam are small and are used chiefly as drum-houses and depositories for the skulls of enemies.[2] The men's house is insignificant also in Angami villages. The boys sometimes sleep on a wooden platform outside some ordinary house; if any place is set aside for them, they do not use it habitually, but for ceremonies which by traditional usage call for a house definitely allotted to the young men of the clan. At other times it is used 'merely as a casual resort for the village bucks'.[3] There is no separate house for girls.[4] The Sema also do not have the *morung* as a separate institution, though in times of scarcity little models are built,



After a photograph by J. H. Hutton, facing p. 123 of J. P. Mills' *The Lhota Nagas* (Macmillan)

FIG. 37. Lhota Naga *morung* at Pangti

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[1] S. E. Peal, 'Notes of a trip up the Dihing basin to Dapha Pani, etc., January and February, 1882', *JASB*, Vol LII (1883), pp. 16-17.

[2] Fürer-Haimendorf, op. cit., p. 377. There is a brief account, and many drawings and photos, of Konyak, Chang, Sangtam and Sema *morung* in J. H. Hutton's *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area East of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929). See also H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 276ff.

[3] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 49.

[4] Ibid., p. 169.

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'the underlying idea apparently being that the scarcity may be due to the village having neglected to conform to a custom which has been abandoned'.[1] Gait, however, says that bachelors usually sleep together in separate houses. 'Unmarried girls sleep together by threes and fours in the front compartment of certain houses; here they assemble at nightfall and sit spinning yarn, cleaning cotton and chaffing and laughing with the young men often for hours.'[2] 'With the Dimasa (Hill Kacharis) the dormitory is now no more than a raised and sheltered platform in the middle of the village, and with the Plains Kacharis of Kamrup it seems to have faded into the *nāmghar* where Hindu religious ceremonies take place.'[3]

But among most of the other Naga tribes the *morung* system is highly developed and elaborate buildings are erected. The *morung* of the Kalyo Kengyu Naga indicate a well-established system; they are the homes of the unmarried youths.[4] The Lhota Naga call their bachelors' house *champo*. Here raids were planned and discussed, and to it all heads taken in war were first brought and prisoners of war detained. No woman was admitted. The buildings were smaller than the great buildings of the Ao and Konyak, yet might be 40 feet long by 15 feet in front. 'The interior of a *champo* is not attractive. It is dark, dirty, smoky, stuffy and full of fleas. Yet a Lhota talks of his happy *champo* days much as an Englishman talks of his schooldays.' As sometimes among the Muria, the *champo* has land belonging to it and from the rice grown thereon pigs and cows are bought for the rebuilding festivals which occur every nine years. When a boy leaves the *champo* after marriage he has to pay a small fine of meat as compensation to his old companions for the loss of his labour.[5]

The Memi have both boys' and girls' dormitories called *ikhuichi* and *iloichi* respectively.[6] In some cases both boys and girls use the same house, the young men sleeping on an upper shelf and the girls below them. 'The publicity', says Hutton, 'probably entails great propriety of behaviour.'[7]

Among the Naga tribes of Manipur, there do not seem to be the great specially-built *morung* characteristic of the Ao and Konyak, but it is considered a public-spirited thing for a man to make over his house to the young men or to allow them to sleep in his own house, a practice reported of the Kabui and Mao tribes and the Vuite and other Kuki clans. The institution was once much more fully developed than it is today or even when Hodson wrote.[8] Dalton says of the Kabui, quoting Colonel McCulloch, that 'according as the village is large or small they assemble in one or several houses which for the time become their homes. These clubs are ruled over despotically by the seniors amongst them, who exact from their juniors, with unsparing hand, service of all kinds. The young women also have their separate places of resort, and between them and the young men intercourse is quite unrestricted, without tending to immorality'.[9] Unmarried girls of the Kuki clans, as in Manipur, had officials called Ningon-lakpas whose duty it was to look after them in their dormitories called *singowdil*.[10]

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[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 37.
[2] E. A. Gait in *Census of India, 1891*. Assam Report, Vol. I, p. 231.
[3] J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas* (London, 1926), p. 73n.
[4] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'Through the Unexplored Mountains of the Assam-Burma Border', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XCI (1938), p. 209.
[5] J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), pp. 24f.
[6] Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 343.
[7] ibid., p. 49.
[8] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 70ff.
[9] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 52.
[10] Hodson, op. cit., p. 76.

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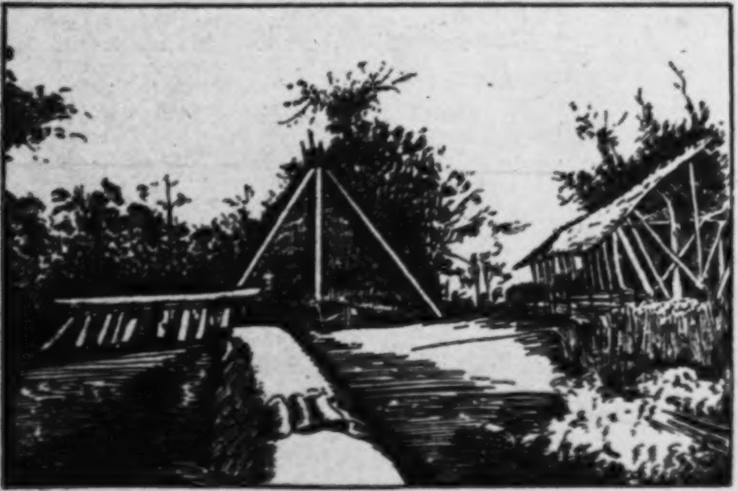
THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

Among the Garo, the bachelors' house is called *dekachang* in Assamese or *nokpante* in tribal dialect. 'This building is lofty and most substantially built: one half of it forms an open hall in which the village conferences are held, and the chief Laskar holds his court. The remainder is enclosed as the dormitory for the young men. The posts and beams are fantastically carved.'[1] In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the more remote portions of the Nowgong district, 'the unmarried male Lalungs reside in a bachelors' *chang*, similar to that found in Garo and Naga villages. In this respect the Lalungs appear to be in an interesting state of transition, as the practice is no longer in vogue in Kamrup and the more accessible portions of Nowgong'.[2] This was in 1891. The Lynngam of the Khasi Hills also have dormitories 'where the young unmarried men sleep, where male guests are accommodated, and where the village festivities go on'. This, says Gurdon, is a 'custom of the Thibeto-Burman tribes in Assam, and is not a Khasi institution'.[3]



After a photograph by Meiklejohn, facing p. 74
in J. P. Mills' *The Ao Nagas* (Macmillan)

FIG. 38. Ao Naga *morung* with 'sitting-out' platform (left) and log-drum shed (right) Mokongtsu village

The institution of the *risomar*, as it existed among the Mikir at the beginning of the present century, was described briefly by Stack. 'The most important institution', he writes, 'from the point of view of agriculture was the club of the *dekas* or young men; but it is reported that this useful form of co-operation is now falling into desuetude.' Formerly the youths had their own house; already when Stack wrote they were living in the place where strangers were

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[1] Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 61. See also A. Playfair, *The Garos* (London, 1909), p. 30.
[2] E. A. Gait in *Census of India, 1891*. Assam Report, Vol. I, p. 231.
[3] P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, second edition, 1914), p. 196.

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lodged in the house of the head of the village. The boys' club was carefully organized and had regular officers to whom duties were assigned.[1]

The Abor had their *morung*, which Dalton describes as a 'town hall'. 'This is in the same style of architecture as the private houses, but it is 200 feet in length and has 16 or 17 fireplaces.'[2] 'The unmarried girls', says Needham, 'have apparently any amount of latitude given them', and he notes their love of singing and dancing.[3]

The *zawlbuk* is common to many of the Lushei Kuki clans, though the Vuite do not build houses but arrange for unmarried boys to sleep in the house of one of the elders, and the Rangte allow them to sleep in the house 'of the girl they like best'.[4] The Purum have a custom that if a man has a son and a daughter the son must go and sleep in the house of someone who has an unmarried daughter.[5] The Lushei, Chiru and Vaiphei build elaborate houses for the boys, generally on a steep hillside, for the tame bison are kept under the house and this arrangement ensures good drainage. 'The young boys of the village have to keep up the supply of firewood for the *zawlbuk*, this duty continuing till they reach the age of puberty, when they cease sleeping in their parents' houses and join the young men in the *zawlbuk*. Until that time they are under the orders of the oldest or most influential boy, who is their *hotu* or superintendent. The *zawlbuk* is the particular property of the unmarried men of the village who gather there in the evening to sing songs, tell stories, and make jokes till it is time to visit their sweethearts, after which they return there for the rest of the night. Travellers not having any friends in the village use the *zawlbuk* as a rest-house, but eating and drinking are seldom, if ever, carried on there.'[6]

I have kept to the end those tribes of whose dormitories we have the fullest and most dependable accounts. The *morung* of both Ao and Rengma Naga have been admirably described by J. P. Mills and that of the Konyak Naga with a wealth of detail by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Near the gate of an Ao Naga village stands the *morung*, 'a really fine building, often over fifty feet long and twenty feet broad, with a front gable thirty feet above the ground. It is both a guard house and a club house, and plays a most important part in the social life of the village'.[7] Its membership is based on an age-group system, admissions being made every three years of all the boys belonging to one particular group. 'Boys on first entering the *morung* have certain menial duties to perform till, in three years' time, a new age-group takes their place and the fags of yesterday blossom into bloods for the next three years of *morung* life.'

In a Rengma village also the *morung* is the finest and most ornate of the buildings. It fulfils a variety of functions. 'It is a club far more strictly preserved from feminine intrusion than any club in England. There the men sit and gossip. The old men are primed with drink and by their discourses keep alive the traditions of the village. In the old days warriors invariably kept their shields, spears and daos in the *morung*. The *morung* is also a sanctuary. No criminal can be touched while in a *morung*. Nor may any crime be committed there. Property can be left lying about in one with absolute safety, for to steal is tabu. Any stranger too must be treated politely. High

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[1] E. Stack and C. J. Lyall, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), pp. 11f.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 23.
[3] J. F. Needham, *Proc. RGS*, May 1886.
[4] J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), pp. 143 and 146.
[5] J. Shakespear, 'The Kuki-Lushai Clans', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXIX (1909), p. 374.
[6] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, p. 22.
[7] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 73.

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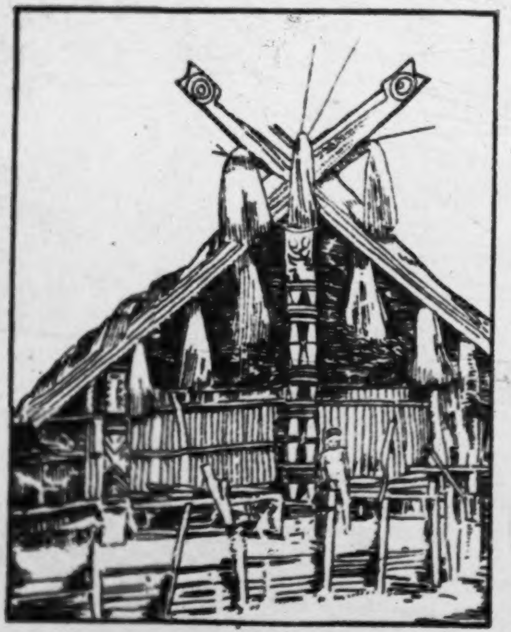
words and abuse are forbidden.' Boys remain in the *morung* from the age of six or seven till they marry. A reflection of Muria practice is seen in the custom of having boys and girls sleeping round bride and bridegroom, though the Muria do not do this after marriage. Girls, like boys, must not sleep with their parents after a certain age and special arrangements are made for them also. In the Tesophenyu group the girls' sleeping-platform is conveniently near the ground, and admittedly young men are allowed to sit on it. Rumour has it that they often sleep there.[1]



After a photograph facing p. 49 in J. P. Mills'
The Rengma Nagas (Macmillan)

FIG. 39. Front of *morung*: Eastern Rengma

Of all the *morung* those of the Konyak Naga seem to be the finest and most elaborate.[2] In each of these great houses, there is a large xylophone seldom less than twenty feet long. The pillars are carefully carved, and as in the Muria ghotul sexual motifs are frequent. Again as in Bastar 'one of the main features of most *morung* is the complete equality of all its members'. There are *morung* officials, but they act only on ceremonial occasions. There is a ceremony of admission for young boys, which with its allusions to the taking of heads and symbolical spearing of a tree, indicates that one of its main purposes is to make the boy—in a magical way—fit for war and head-hunting.

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[1] J. P. Mills, *The Rengma Nagas* (London, 1937), pp. 49ff.

[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas', *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), pp. 349ff.

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It also marks his entry into the economic life of the *morung*. As with the Muria this does not involve any considerable loosening of the ties between a boy and his parents; he still takes all his meals with them, and he is much more often seen in their house than in the *morung*, which he uses mainly as a sleeping-place.

Fürer-Haimendorf has fully studied the interesting question of reciprocity between *morung*, indeed in such detail that I cannot even summarise his conclusions here. Connected with each *morung* is a girls' dormitory—the *yo*—where the girls assemble every evening and are often visited by the boys of their *morung*. 'But only a few girls actually sleep in the *yo*, for the smaller girls go back to their parents' houses and the bigger girls usually prefer to go with their lovers to the granaries.' As among the Muria, boys and girls exchange gifts, bamboo combs, cloth and ear-rings, and they too use a traditional formula when seeking a girl's favours. Lovers work together in the fields, and the girls sometimes give feasts for the boys.

The Konyak *morung* is less a 'kingdom of the unmarried' than the ghotul. It is an affair of adults as well as of children. It is a centre of village life and a pillar of Konyak social and political organization. 'The *morung* system regulates the relations of every man and woman with the other members of the community, and forms a framework for the numerous mutual obligations between individuals and groups. It strengthens the sense of social unity, developing in the boys of a *morung* a strong *esprit de corps*, and at the same time encourages competition between the *morung*, thus stimulating the activities of the whole village . . . The *morung* is an extremely ancient and important feature of Naga culture.'

Almora and British Garhwal

The *rambang* of the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal has been described, rather unsympathetically, by Sherring. The institution did not exist everywhere, even at the beginning of the century, but flourished in certain parganas, Darma, Byans and Chaudans. Sherring describes the *rambang* as 'the village club and generally a very disreputable place'.

> Married and unmarried men go there, also single women, and married women up to the time that their first child is born. Girls start to go to the *rambang* from the age of ten years, and practically never sleep at home after that age, the result being that a virtuous girl is unknown in pargana Darma. As is to be expected, a system such as this leads to the freest intimacy, and one sees a man walking about with his arm round a girl's waist, both under the same covering shawl, a practice common in Europe but rare in the East.
>
> Large villages have more than one *rambang*, and, as the avowed object of these *rambangs* is to arrange marriages, only those persons resort there who can marry one another, such as the boys of a neighbouring village, or, if of the same village, only those who are not relations. If girls wish to invite the boys of a neighbouring village to meet them they wave long sheets, one girl holding one end and another the other end. This waving can be seen for miles, and is really a very pretty custom. It is also used in bidding farewell to friends and lovers, and is frequently accompanied by whistling, which is the usual method employed by the boys of inviting girls to come out of their homes. On hearing the whistles the girls take a little fire and issue forth from their houses and proceed with the boys to the chosen spot, and, if they are

> old friends, they sit side by side round a blazing fire, otherwise all the boys sit on one side and the girls face them.
>
> Often the girls dance, and sometimes the boys, while singing, smoking and drinking are continued until they are all weary, when sleep brings quiet to the scene.

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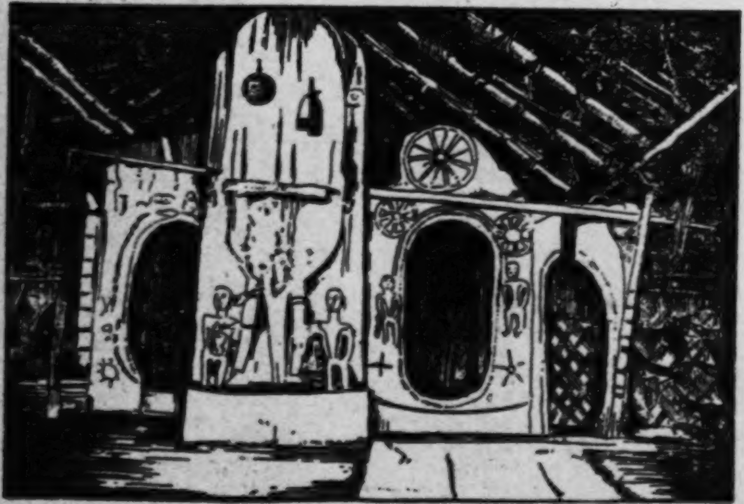
The *rambang*, like the dormitories elsewhere, is the regular guest-house for visitors.

> When a resident of a distant part of the country comes to a village, travelling on business, he would not dream of asking his friends to give him food and shelter, for this would be regarded as a disgrace: he must wait to be invited by them first. However, if he goes to the *rambang* he is sure of a hospitable welcome. In this way the *rambang* is a great convenience, but it can only be used thus by persons known in the village. A stranger is unwelcome without an introduction.[1]



After a photograph by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf

FIG. 40. Konyak Naga *morung* of Wakching

Bihar

Our knowledge of the village dormitory in peninsular India is far less detailed and exact than that of the *morung* and kindred institutions in Assam. Of the Santal we are told by a nineteenth-century civilian that 'the juvenile community are strictly controlled by their own officers (the Jog-manjhi and Jog-paramanik), whose superintendence continues till the youth or maiden enters on the responsibilities of married life'.[2] Dalton says that there is no

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[1] C. A. Sherring, 'Notes on the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal', *Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), pp. 105f.

[2] W. W. Hunter, *The Annals of Rural Bengal* (London, 1868), p. 217.

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separate dormitory for boys or girls among the Santal, but observes that 'the utmost liberty is given to the youth of both sexes. Unrestrained they resort to markets, to festivals and village dances in groups; and if late in the evening they return under the escort of the young men who have been their partners in the dances or have played to them, no harm is thought of it'. 'There is always reserved an open space in front of the Jog-manjhi's house as a dancing place. To this the young men frequently resort after the evening meal, and the sound of their flutes and drums soon attracts the maidens, who smooth and adjust their long hair, and adding to it a flower or two, blithely join them.'[1] This sounds very like the situation actually existing today in the Mardapal Pargana in Bastar, where the actual building has disappeared though all the traditions of ghotul life continue without it.

Of the Paharia dormitories in the hill villages of the Santal Parganas, we have only the most fragmentary accounts. Bainbridge says that 'the dormitory system prevails among the Saorias. The marriageable girls have a house to themselves and the youths have another'.[2] Of the Mal Paharia, O'Malley simply says, 'the dormitory system prevails' and adds that 'sexual licence, though prohibited in theory, is tolerated in practice'.[3] In March 1944 I accompanied W. G. Archer on a ten days' tour of the Damin and saw such characteristic villages as Surujbera (Saoria), Amarbitta and Gaurpara (Kumar Bagh Paharia) and several Mal Paharia settlements. But beyond getting a vague confirmation that the dormitories existed, it did not seem to me that the institution was very much alive. At Surujbera, however, we saw two substantial boys' houses and a girls' house at opposite ends of the village. Roy says of the allied 'Pahira' of Manbhum that although 'every bachelor in the boys' dormitory (*dhāngar-mela*) has his recognized sweetheart among the maidens of the maidens' dormitory (*sāgin-pāl*), post-nuptial immorality is rather rare'.[4]

Bihar and Orissa is the classic home in India of the village dormitory, though the advance of 'civilization' has largely destroyed it. But we are fortunate in that the dormitory of this part of the world has been described by two writers of great authority, E. T. Dalton and Sarat Chandra Roy.[5] Dalton was a man of keen observation, wide powers of sympathy and a brilliant literary style, who had the advantage of travelling among the tribes before they had become at all sophisticated. S. C. Roy spent forty years observing the Uraon; when he wrote his first book about them he had given them fifteen years; he lived in their villages, talked their language, shared their life, made scores of intimate friends, championed their cause in the Courts, the District Council and the Legislature. His most elaborate work was on the Uraon, but he had an intimate knowledge of the Munda, the Birhor, the Kharia and the Bhuiya of Orissa. A Catholic missionary, Father P. Dehon, also gave a brief and hardly sympathetic account of the *dhumkuria* at the beginning of the century.[6]

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[1] Dalton, op. cit., p. 214. On the other hand, the missionary Petrick told S. E. Peal that communal barracks for the unmarried of both sexes were seen (Peal wrote in 1892) 'in all Sonthali and Oraon villages'. Peal, op. cit., p. 254.

[2] R. B. Bainbridge, *The Saorias of the Rajmahal Hills*, *Mem. ASB*, Vol. II (1907), p. 84.

[3] L. S. S. O'Malley, *Santal Parganas Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1910), p. 74. See also S. S. Sarkar, *The Malers of the Rajmahal Hills*, pp. 74ff. and Dalton, op. cit., p. 272.

[4] S. C. Roy, 'The Pahiras of Chota Nagpur', *JBORS*, Vol. VI, p. 539.

[5] Roy, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur* (Ranchi, 1915) and *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928).

[6] P. Dehon, 'Religion and Customs of the Uraons', *Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), p. 155.

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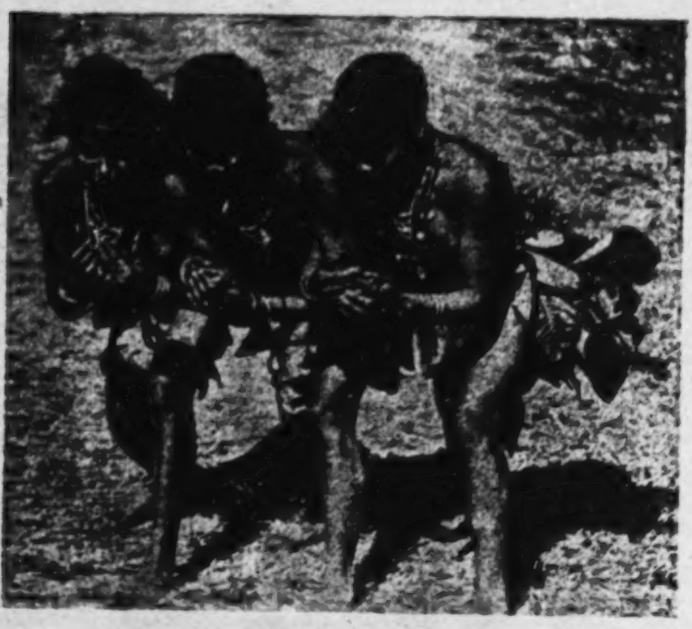

Plate LVII

Dances of the Juang dormitory

[p. 292(A)]

Kharia AW36

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Plate LVIII

Juang youth with chang drum

Juang youths with long drum in *front of the dormitory at Kerba*

[p. 292(b)]

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTÛL

G x883 x171 In his book *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, Roy gives an elaborate account of the *jonkh-erpa* or *dhumkuria* as it existed in certain villages twenty-five years ago in the east of the Ranchi District. Unhappily, except for a hint that even at that date the public *dhumkuria* building was beginning to disappear from village life, he gives no indication of the statistical distribution of the dormitories, nor whether the customs he describes were universally practised or confined only to a few villages.

G x883 x171 O 883 342 [532] At the beginning of March 1940 Shamrao Hivale and I spent a few days with W. G. Archer visiting Uraon villages in East Ranchi,[1] and even in this short time it was possible to note many interesting parallels to the Bastar ghotul. The *jonkh-erpa* or *dhumkuria* building is still, as it was when Roy wrote twenty-five years ago, a substantial well-kept hut with a door, but no windows, in a prominent part of the village. At Borhambey, there were well-decorated pillars and beams, and the deep grass on the floor covered with mats must have made a comfortable bed. The house at Kota was supported by stone pillars. At Murma the *dhumkuria* was a well-built house in a picturesque spot. In most cases, the houses overlook a beautifully-kept dancing-ground, sometimes surrounded with stone seats. Inside the dormitories, we found drums, mats, piles of wood, but only at Borhambey the strings of bull-roarers and foot-scrapers described by Roy. The most significant objects kept in the dormitories are the village emblems, wooden animals taken out for religious fairs and preserved with the greatest care and attention. Thus at Saparum the boys exhibited with pride an admirable wooden elephant; at Nagri they produced an elephant and a coloured banner; at Kota we saw a horse supported on bamboo beams in the verandah: at Mandar there is a fish; at Khanjia seven crocodiles. That these traditional and semi-sacred objects should be preserved in the dormitory is the surest sign of the vitality of the institution. Moreover, its central position and the obvious pride the boys took in their club testified to the fact that among the Uraon the dormitory was, at least in former days, socially approved and an integral part of tribal life.

G x883 x171 O 883 The most striking difference between the Uraon and the Bastar institutions is that Uraon girls do not share the life of the *dhumkuria*, nor do they seem to have anything resembling the chelik-motiari relationship. Boys, who are here called *dhāngar* or *lokhār*, seem to be admitted a little later than in Bastar, at the age of eleven or twelve. They are divided into three age-groups and many boys retain their membership—especially now that children are being married comparatively young—until they have one or two children by their wives. The supervision and control of the dormitory is in the hands of a boy who is called the Dhangar-Mahto and he is assisted by the Chalaba or Kotwar. These officers are changed every three years. There is a simple ceremony of appointment, as in Bastar, and the outgoing Mahto hands to the new Mahto a leaf-cup full of rice-beer while the outgoing Kotwar gives the new Kotwar his insignia of office, a plaited straw-cord, taking care to hit him twice with it, no doubt as a means of transferring his power and authority. New members are admitted only once in three years, not annually as in Bastar, and there are elaborate ceremonies of initiation. Roy has described in detail the new moon hunt which precedes this, and the taking of omens by new pots of water. The ceremonies described by Roy are not now maintained everywhere. At Kota we were told that boys were admitted at the Sarhul festival, when they had to bring certain offerings. On admission, the parents have to supply

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[1] We visited Kota, Semra, Agra, Saparum, Nagri (Kumbhar, Tola), Gutwa, Mandar, Borhambey, Murma, Jajhpur and three others near Lohardaga.

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a lamp, a small earthen pot, and enough oil to light the dormitory for a fortnight.

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As in Bastar the *dhumkuria* boys have many social duties. They cook for visitors at a wedding. When strangers come to the village and are accommodated in the dormitory, the *dhāngar* have to entertain them and shampoo their legs. Younger boys at all times have to massage the legs of the older boys and scrape the soles of their feet with special wooden scrapers. As in Bastar, if there is urgent need of a supply of labour, a peasant can arrange for the boys to work for him. In return for their services to the village, the boys are allowed to gather fruit from the trees in the neighbourhood, and they perform a ceremonial gathering of mahua flowers. Roy describes a curious rite for the driving away of cattle disease performed at night by naked *dhāngar* boys. As we shall see, the chelik of Bastar have a ceremony for ridding the village of disease.

There does not seem to be anything to correspond to the dancing expeditions of the Muria, but the Uraon boys go to *jatra* fairs, and from time to time attend what is called a *bhaiyari* gathering. The occasion for this is the formal present of a flag. The visitors approach with drums beating and their hosts come out to welcome them with pots of water, offerings of rice and bundles of leafy mango-twigs. They wash the feet of their guests, scatter rice over them, and throw the 'benedictory mango-twigs' at them. Then they dance together. On these occasions the boys enter into formal friendships and alliances with one another.

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There is no room here to describe all the various ceremonies and occasions that characterize Uraon dormitory life; they are fully described by Roy and have no counterpart among the Muria. We may mention, however, two remarkable ceremonies which Roy believes have for their aim the magical strengthening of the procreative powers of the young men 'so as to enable them to indefinitely increase the huntsmen in the tribe'. The first of these is the propitiation of Mutri Chandi. For three nights, the unmarried boys and girls dance in the village dancing-ground, and the boys steal the girls' *bindio* ear-ornaments. On the evening of the fourth day, the boys go to the place where Mutri Chandi is represented by a stone half buried under a tree. A boy priest digs a hole before the stone and sacrifices a black fowl. He puts the blood and severed head into the hole together with the girls' ornaments. While these are being offered the boys shout 'May girl children decrease and boy children increase'—a curiously different prayer to that of the Muria boys at their festival, 'Let us have sound sleep with our motiari, and let them not conceive!' Then all the boys urinate into the hole and they fill it up with earth. They retire a short distance and pelt the tree above Mutri Chandi with clods of earth.

This occurs shortly after the Sarhul festival every year. Another rite is described by Roy as occurring twice a year, once before the Phagu festival in March and again before the Sarhul in April or May. The Mahto of the boys takes them to some secluded spot carrying a new thin sal stick and a sal sapling in which a slit has been made to resemble the vagina. The boys smear each other with red earth. The sal sapling is planted firmly in the earth. The youngest boys have to strip themselves naked and the older ones spit into the slit in the sapling. The little boys now insert in turn their penile organs into the saliva-filled slit. As each boy does so the Mahto hits him with the sal stick. 'Here', says Roy, 'we see a persistent endeavour to gain an accession of power through alliance with the powerful force of Nature and of man. The saliva of efficient young men, and contact with the powerful sal sapling and

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the sal stick are evidently supposed to promote fecundity. And the object of the ceremony seems to be a magical accession of power to the procreative organs.'[1] Dehon gives a different picture of the initiation ceremony. 'When a boy is six or seven years old, it is time for him to become a member of the *dhumkuria* or common dormitory. The eldest boys catch hold of his left arm and, with burning cloth, burn five deep marks on the lower part of his arm. This they do to be recognized by the Uraons at their death, when they go into the other world.'[2]

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The girls' dormitory, or *pel-erpā*, is not a public building, and in fact 'its location is not supposed to be known to anyone except its inmates and to those of the Bachelors' Dormitory'. Roy says that the girls have no office-bearers, but an elderly male Uraon is appointed Pelo-kotwar to look after them. There is, however, often a *Barka Dhāngrin*, the eldest of the girls and their natural leader. Among the girls, as among the boys, there is a three years' novitiate during which the little girls have to do all the drudgery of the institution. The girls have many duties at weddings and may be called in a body to help in the reaping of paddy. They have to cook at the bone-burial ceremony.

We have little information about the relationships between the boys' and the girls' dormitories. Boys and girls constantly dance together on the village dancing-ground till a late hour at night. 'During the three years of her novitiate, each Uraon maiden is required every year to plait a strip of palm-leaf-mat about six inches wide and as long as the length of the Bachelors' Hall.' These are given to the boys who stitch them together and put them on the floor of their house. There is also a ceremonial presentation of barley-shoots by the girls to the boys. There are obviously bound to be many attachments between boys and girls as in every village in the world, but is there anything resembling the chelik-motiari relationship?

Dalton knew the *dhumkuria* over seventy years ago. His view is that 'it is well known that the girls often find their way to the bachelors' hall and in some villages actually sleep there. I not long ago saw a *dhumkuria* in a Sirguja village in which the boys and girls all slept every night. They themselves admitted the fact, the elders of the village confirmed it, and appeared to think that there was no impropriety in the arrangement. That it leads to promiscuous intercourse is most indignantly denied, and it may be that there is safety in the multitude; but it must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy. Yet the young Oraon girls are modest in demeanour, their manners gentle, language entirely free from obscenity, and whilst hardly ever failing to present their husbands with a pledge of love in due course *after* marriage, instances of illegitimate births are rare, though they often remain unmarried for some years after reaching maturity. Long and strong attachments between young couples are common. *Dhumkuria* lads are no doubt great flirts, but each has a special favourite among the young girls of his acquaintance and the girls well know to whose touch or pressure in the dance each maiden's heart is especially responsive. Liaisons between boys and girls of the same village seldom end in marriage.'[3] Father Dehon's account is dated thirty years later. 'As for the girls', he says, 'they go and generally sleep in the house

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[1] Roy, op. cit., p. 243. But see p. 413 of the present work.

[2] Dehon, op. cit., p. 153.

[3] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248. In an article written five years earlier, Dalton says that an elderly duenna looked after the girls and was 'always armed with a stick to keep the boys off'. E. T. Dalton, 'The "Kols" of Chota-Nagpore: The Oraons', *JASB*, Vol. XXXV (1866), p. 175.

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of an old widow who is not such a fearful cerberus as not to be softened by kind attentions from the boys of the *dhumkuria*. The would-be vestals are then, as may be imagined, exposed to many dangers. In villages in which they less respect themselves, the boys and girls sleep promiscuously together in the same dormitory. The *dhumkuria* boys form a kind of association; and they pledge themselves to the greatest secrecy about what is going on in their dormitory. Woe to the boy who dares to break that pledge. He would be most unmercifully beaten and looked upon as an outcast.'[1]

Roy, however, says that it is an ancient Uraon custom that no girl should enter the boys' house.[2] If a girl breaks this rule the boys will temporarily lose their eyesight. In Mandar we were told that she herself would get night-blindness—a more appropriate punishment. Roy suggests that most of the boys and girls pair off, and that the older girls 'decide beforehand which boy will suit a particular girl' though the wishes of the younger boys and girls are not ignored. A boy indicates his choice by wearing some token, a flower or ornament which the girl is in the habit of using. During the novitiate period, however, 'a boy is not permitted to have intimacy with a girl'. A girl who refuses to take a partner among the boys is ostracized by the other girls. Roy thinks that 'there is a well-recognized rule of fidelity' among the boys and girls, and 'adultery' is punished by the Dhangar Mahto with a fine. Contrary to Bastar custom, this relationship is not necessarily dissolved by the marriage of the parties to it; it may continue until a child has been born to either. Marriages between boys and girls of the same village are uncommon, but 'community of clan is (in practice, though not in theory) often no bar to pre-marital intercourse'. To prevent conception, says Roy, an Uraon girl 'either reverses her loin-cloth for the nonce by wearing it with its front side to the back or ties to her loin-cloth just over the abdomen the false plait of hair sometimes worn as a coiffure'. If this fails, recourse is made, as in Bastar, to abortifacients.

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W. G. Archer tells me that the *dhumkuria* now only exist in the eastern sub-divisions of the Ranchi District. He did not find them in the Gumla sub-division when he was working there. On the other hand, H. J. B. Le Patourel, Diwan of Jashpur, a State that lies on the western border of Bihar, has sent me an interesting account of how the general tradition of the *dhumkuria* and the selection of a leader still persists, though the public building has now disappeared.

There is insufficient material for a full comparison between the *dhumkuria* and the ghotul. Unhappily, neither Dalton nor Roy was able to describe the institution with sufficient objectivity. It is very desirable that a full and detailed investigation of the Uraon dormitory should be made before it is too late; I am convinced that there is a great deal more to be discovered than has yet seen the light of publication.

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Except in parts of the Lodma Pargana, says Roy, the Munda have no institution so fully developed as the Uraon *dhumkuria*. But 'all the young bachelors have a fixed common dormitory in the house of a Munda neighbour who may have a hut to spare for the purpose. And similarly, all the unmarried girls of a hamlet sleep together in a house belonging to some childless old Munda couple or to some lone elderly Munda widow. These *gitiora* are in their own humble way seminaries for moral and intellectual training. When young bachelors and young maidens are assembled in their respective *gitiora* after their evening meals, riddles are propounded and solved, folk-tales,

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[1] Dehon, op. cit., p. 135.

[2] Roy, op. cit., p. 248.

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traditions and fables are narrated and memorized, and songs sung and learnt until bed-time.'[1]

I myself was only able to see one mixed village of Ho and Munda, Hessadih, on the main road between Ranchi and Chaibasa. This is a large village with two dormitories for Munda boys and one for Munda girls, and one for Ho boys. It also has a school. The first dormitory we saw was a hut with open bamboo walls and a wooden door, standing in a compound near the village dancing-ground; there were three living-houses and the girls' dormitory within the same fence.

In the boys' house there were two beds, a raised platform on which we found two boys seated mending a drum, and from the roof hung fish-traps, mats and leaf-raincoats. It was an obviously lived-in place, cosy and untidy. Just across the compound was the dormitory for five or six girls. A boy said that the girls cleaned their house for them, made them mats and brought grass for repairing their roof. He was very emphatic about the duty of the girls to make their mats without reward.

On the edge of the village, in a very pretty spot under jack-fruit trees, there was another Munda dormitory which seemed to have been specially constructed for the purpose. It had a cylindrical grass roof, the side walls being only 3½ feet high. It was entirely open in front. It had a wooden fence round it, and a gate, which opened onto a clear open space with large mats covered with drying rice.

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In the Ho quarter of the village, again on the outskirts, was another small shed of somewhat the same pattern, which also appeared to have been specially made. There were three mats there, musical instruments (*tuhila*), a fire burning before the mouth of the hut, and a fence—part of which consisted, astonishingly, of tall memorial menhirs for the dead. Ten boys, we were told, slept here regularly.

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The local schoolmaster, a Lutheran Munda, had the lowest opinion of these dormitories and said that they led to every kind of sexual excess and so absorbed the attention of the youths that they could not attend to their studies. The dormitories, he thought, existed for sex and sex alone. I give his opinion for what it is worth; converts, especially when talking to strangers, are not apt to regard with favour their old customs. It is interesting to note, however, that the Asur Christians have not found their dormitories inconsistent with missionary teaching.

The Ho have been described by D. N. Majumdar in his book *A Tribe in Transition*.[2] But just because the Ho are a tribe in transition, it is exceedingly hard to discover the real truth about their ways. They are already sensitive, shy, resentful of inquiries. When we visited the Kolhan with W. G. Archer at the end of February 1940, we encountered a genuine reluctance to speak of the dormitories or even to admit their existence. Before our arrival inquiries (connected with the Census) in thirty-one villages had been met with a stolid negative. It was only with difficulty that we persuaded a few individuals to reveal the secrets of the institution. Our information is, of course, quite unsatisfactory; I cannot help feeling that the unusual reticence about the *gitiora*—as the dormitories are called—may conceal facts

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[1] S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 385f. In the early article by Dalton to which I have already referred, he somewhat rashly declares that 'the Dhoomkooreea is never used by boys of the Moondah tribe. It is an institution quite unknown to the Hos, but the Moondahs and Hos build themselves houses in which all the family can be decently accommodated'. *JASB*, Vol. XXXV, p. 176.

[2] D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937).

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of deep sociological interest. But these facts cannot be discovered by inquiry, but only by observation—a lengthy and exacting task.

Such information as we were able to obtain may be summarized as follows.

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In order to prevent boys and girls sleeping in the same room as their parents, the custom arose of putting them to bed in the kitchen or store-room. Sometimes several boys would come and sleep together, or the girls would gather in the spare room of a friend. In Rumkut, for example, we found some ten boys sleeping together in a large room which was used partly for stores, partly for this purpose. There was a small house some distance away in the compound of another family which was used by half-a-dozen girls—their ages must have been between 16 and 18. There appeared to be similar arrangements in the other three hamlets of this village. In one small hamlet, where all belonged to one family, the parents were sleeping in one room, three girls in another and the two boys in a third. Here we have the village dormitory either in embryo—or decay. Should another family settle in this hamlet, the boys would naturally go to join their friends in their room and the girls in theirs.

But there appears to be no real organization, no officers of the *gitiora* and no recognized relation between the girls and boys. The girls do not seem to go to clean the boys' house, it is possible that even the sleeping mats are not made by the girls as presents for the boys, but are made by the womenfolk of the boys' own families. There is no training in social or sexual duties, nor does the Ho *gitiora* seem to be closely associated with dancing.

In Rumkut we were told that four of the girls had special friends among the boys, and one boy at least had a comb given him by his girl. But these were not chelik-motiari relationships; they were the liaisons that exist between the unmarried in every village in the world.

If Majumdar's book is to be trusted, the dormitory does not occupy a very prominent place in Ho life. 'In many villages'—this is almost all he has to say—'one meets with a huge dormitory house overlooking the Akhara dancing-place, where the bachelors of the village sleep in the night and lounge during the day. Inside the house, one finds a big mat made by the maidens of the village and respectfully presented to the tribal manhood, a number of musical instruments, and all the offensive and defensive weapons of the inmates. There are a number of pegs on the inside walls of the house for hanging the bows and arrows of the inmates, and most of the requisites for fishing and hunting are also stored there. In some villages this house is absent, and in its place we find the outer house of residence of the village chief serving all the purposes of the dormitory. It is only the bachelors' house that opens out into the Akhara, but all other houses that may be adjacent to it have their backs towards it.'

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The Birhor dormitory is also known as *gitiora* and has been described by Roy.[1] The buildings are as different from the splendid *morung* of Assam as can be imagined. Two small huts of leaves and branches are made, one for boys and one for girls; the boys' hut has only one door, but the girls' hut has an additional door at the back. Boys and girls are admitted when they are about ten years old; there do not appear to be any dormitory ranks or even formal leaders. An old woman is supposed to sleep across the doorway of the girls' hut, but boys enter by the back way and girls go out to meet their sweethearts who summon them by striking the walls of the hut. 'Every bachelor has his sweetheart among the maidens. And I am informed by some

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[1] S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 245ff.

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Birhor elders that to attract a maiden he loves, a young man sometimes approaches her without any clothes on his body.'

'There is, however, no trace of sexual communism. On the other hand, there appears to exist a well-recognised rule of fidelity.' If a boy sleeps with the recognised lover of another boy, the latter retaliates by sleeping with the first boy's girl.[1] Occasionally 'spirit-possession is made a pretence by a young man to go with his sweetheart. He meets her at a market and begins to shake his head violently and in this condition of supposed spirit-possession carries her off in the direction of some jungle'. In case of pre-marital pregnancy, abortion is caused by the use of certain roots. 'But the occasions for this are few and far between.' Forbes stresses the integrity of the Birhor marriage-bond. 'The boys and girls live together and are allowed all freedom before marriage, but in their wedded life they are exceedingly chaste.'[2]

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Ruben's monumental *Eisenschmiede und Damonen in Indien* gives some account of the dormitory system among the Asur. He rightly stresses the reason for the establishment of separate sleeping-places as the desire not to disturb the intimate life of the parents. He mentions that some older person usually sleeps with the children. 'The *panch* of the village watches to see that their life is not too immoral. Love and marriage are not absolutely identical for the Asur.'[3] 'Generally, however, the young people do what they like in the dormitories and the intercourse of unmarried people is permitted; this was admitted without embarrassment.' Shamrao Hivale and I visited the Neterhat plateau with W. G. Archer in March 1940 and saw a number of Asur villages.[4] It was impossible in the time to get any but the most superficial knowledge of these institutions; we could only ask about them and had no opportunity for living in them and observing for ourselves. But it was obvious that the institution here was in no way to be compared to the Bastar ghotul.

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In the first place, the Asur do not build special houses for their unmarried boys and girls. The building of separate houses may be taken as a necessary sign of a fully developed dormitory system; where these houses are not well kept, the institution is probably in decay. The Asur dormitories are small huts belonging to lonely people who, in order to get a little company, let the children of the village use them. In Bijapath, for example, a village of Christianized Bir Asur, we saw two such dormitories. The girls' house, which belonged to Gahin an old widow, stood in the village street. Inside were pots, baskets of earth, a cooking-hearth, rope, wooden seats and a mat. Here slept five little girls—we saw them. About thirty yards down the street, round the corner, was the boys' house, larger but less well kept, which had been given to the boys by Kalu Asur, after his wife had died. Here too were a number of domestic things, pots, hearth and grain-bin, but the boys kept their mats, drums, and bows and arrows there. We saw most of the boys—Chotan, Alfred, Pandra, Lukas, Tempu. As nearly all the people in the village belonged to the same sept, the Kusar, I doubt if there could be much romance between the members of the two dormitories. The girls did not do anything for the boys, did not clean their house for them or bring them toilet twigs; they did not even dance together, at least not without the older people's help.

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[1] I have known this to happen in Bastar. At Bandarsinal the ghotul Kotwar ran away with the betrothed of his friend the Diwan. So in rage the Diwan ran away with the Kotwar's betrothed. Both couples were brought back and reassorted.

[2] L. R. Forbes, *Report on the Ryotwaree Settlement of the Government Farms in Palamow* (1872), p. 44.

[3] W. Ruben, *Eisenschmiede und Damonen in Indien* (Leiden, 1939), p. 73.

[4] We visited Nawa Toli, Kotaya, Lupungpath, Dokar, Bijapath, Kerakhair, Johipath and Jam Toli.

Kharia. AW36 Central Tribes AW46
Asur

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So too at Jobhipath, we were shown where the girls slept, in a small room off the verandah of a house to which some of them belonged. It was as though two or three sisters were to ask all their friends to come and keep them company. The boys' house was a hundred yards away, at the other end of the village; their drums and mats were hung up in the house, the owner of which, a widower, we were told, usually slept with them and looked after them. These were Bir Asur.

We were told that in the Christian Bir Asur village of Lupungpath there were similar dormitories—Ruben says that in this village the Christian teacher had two houses and had allocated one of them to the boys—but in the two Birjhia Asur villages we visited we found no signs of the custom, probably because they were both small hamlets.

Of the Koroa (Korwa) fifty years ago, Driver wrote, 'Every large village has its *Damkuria* or bachelors' quarter, for boys who are too old to live with their parents; girls stay with their parents until they are married'. In front of the building was a dancing-ground and young people enjoyed 'considerable freedom' before marriage.[1]

Orissa

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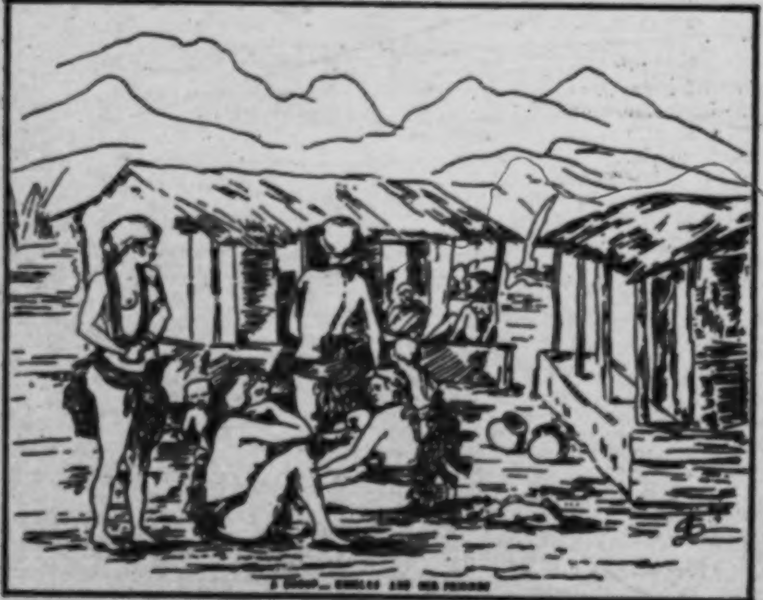
The dormitory system survives among most of the wilder tribes of Orissa and I myself have made preliminary investigations among the Juang, Bhuiya,



From E. A. Samuell's 'Notes on a Forest Race called Puttooas or Juangs', *JASB*, Vol. XXV (1856)

FIG. 41

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[1] W. H. P. Driver, *JASB*, Vol. LX (1891).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A [illegible] Gond

Naga AR 13
Konyak

Plate LIX

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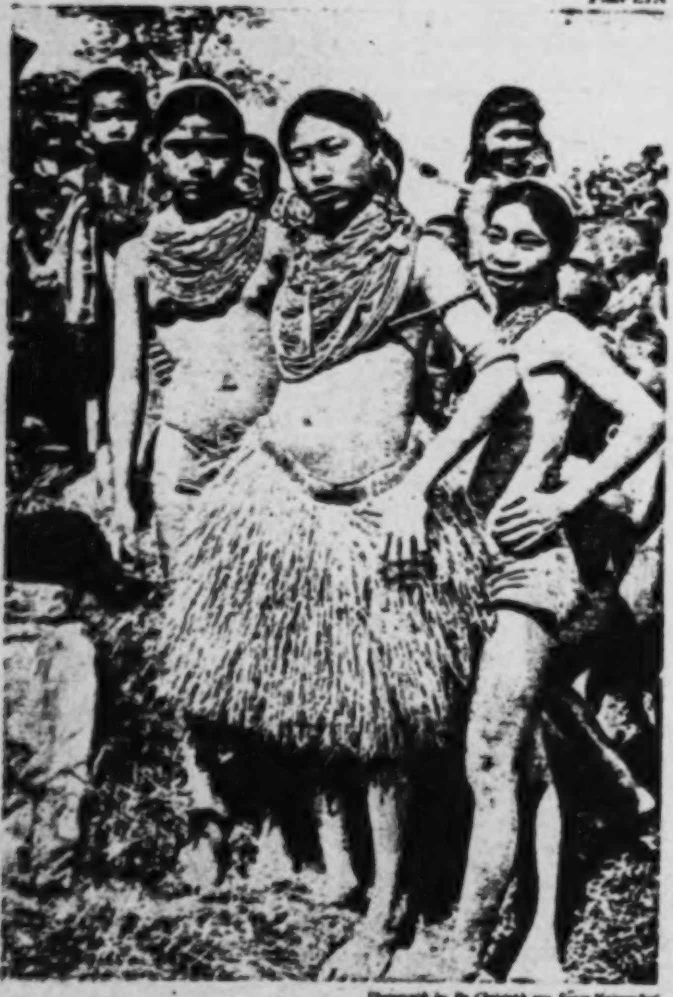

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Konyak girls with skirts of palm-leaves

[p. 300 (A)]

Naga AR13
Konyak

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Photographs by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

ABOVE: Konyak girls dancing at the spring festival

BELOW: Konyak girls dressing each other's hair

[p. 300 (B)]

G x883 x171 K 883 342

Kond, Gadaba, Bondo, Didai Porojà and Savara. The Orissa dormitories are of two distinct types: the Juang and Bhuiya build a large and sometimes elaborately decorated house in the centre of the village which serves not only as a sleeping-place for the young men but as a club and council chamber for the elders—the girls have a separate house near by. The other tribes allocate houses originally built for ordinary domestic purposes to the boys and girls separately anywhere in the village, and the social function of the men's house passes to the stone seat and platform of the elders which is such an important feature of their cultural life.

G x883 x171 K

Most of the Orissa tribes have a fairly strict system of territorial exogamy and this means that normally the relationships between the boys' and girls' houses of a village are fundamentally different from those of the Muria: the dancing expedition to other villages takes the place of the evening spent together in the home dormitory.

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The Orissa system is everywhere marked by separate huts for boys and girls, a system of dancing expeditions leading to adventure and marriage, the organization of tribal youth under a leader, the employment of the dormitory members on ceremonial occasions and in work for the State and the wealthier members of the community. It co-exists with a very high standard of domestic fidelity after marriage and, as in Bastar, with shifting cultivation, a still active megalithic culture, the ritual hunt, elaborate festivals and ceremonial dances.[1]

K 291 342

In the cold weather of 1942, I toured in the Juang Pirh of Keonjhar and visited a number of Juang villages in the lovely country round Malyagiri in Pal Lahara State. Some of the people, whom Dalton calls 'the most primitive people I have met with or read of', still wear their leaf-dress. The dormitory, called by them *darbar* or *mandagarh*, flourishes in Keonjhar, but has generally decayed in Pal Lahara and Dhenkanal, the other two States where Juang are to be found. In Keonjhar the dormitory stands in the centre of the village and is often an imposing building with carved beams and pillars. Near by is a separate, smaller house, the *dhāngri-bāsa*, for the girls.

G x883 x171 K

The Juang dormitory may be considered under several aspects: it is the centre of the male social and economic life of the village; it is an organization of the youth of the tribe; it is a school of dancing; it is an expression of the communal art of the people.

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The place of the *darbar* in the social life of the village is emphasized by its construction. It is a big comfortable house, open all along one side, with a high verandah. At the back of the house, there is often a small room in which goats are kept for sacrifice or an enclosure for the village gods. On a platform are great bins for the collection of the tax-grain. At Samagiri, the moneylender's accounts were written on the wall: at Bali, they were kept—inscribed on strips of palm-leaf—on a ledge. In the middle of the room is a fire, kept always burning.

G x883 x171 K 883

In the *darbar* the men assemble for every important event in their corporate life. Here they settle the distribution of clearings for their axe-cultivation 'so that the gods can overhear everything we do'. Here the priest's axe, with which the first tree is felled, is stored. From the *darbar* fire is taken to kindle

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[1] Brief references to the Orissa dormitories will be found in (for the Juang), Dalton, op. cit., p. 154; H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. I, p. 351; (for the Kond), Dalton, op. cit., p. 295; (for the Pauri Bhuiya), S. C. Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa* (Ranchi, 1935); Risley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 114; (for the Poroja), *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 198; G. Ramadas, 'The Porojas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 248; (for the Gadaba), G. Ramadas, 'The Gadabas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 165; and other references given later in the text.

x G 883
x 171
K 883

the brushwood in the clearings. Before every festival the men meet here to decide what is to be done. Here the grain, which is to be taken to the treasury for the payment of taxes, is collected. Visitors are entertained in the *darbar*, especially that special type of visitor who has come ceremonially to arrange a wedding. The *darbar*, in fact, combines the functions of a club, a church and a municipal office.

This means, of course, that the *darbar* is less a *dinda-rāj*, a 'kingdom of the young', than the Muria ghotul. But it does serve, in its way, to organize and control the youth of the tribe. Unmarried boys sleep here 'so that they will not see their parents together'. They are called *bhendia*: unmarried girls are *dhāngri*. They are not given titles, but their leaders are known as Muro-bhendia and Muro-dhangri respectively. The *darbar* members have their social duties as in Bastar: the *bhendia* must attend on visitors and assist at funerals: boys and girls must dance at weddings and festivals: they may be called to work in the fields by a villager in need of help. Discipline seems to be strict. The girls have to keep their own house in order and clean and cow-dung that of the boys. Younger boys must fetch wood for the *darbar* fire, bring water and tooth-twigs for the toilet of their seniors, and massage them in the evenings. Girls have to provide leaves and make leaf-plates and cups for communal feasts.

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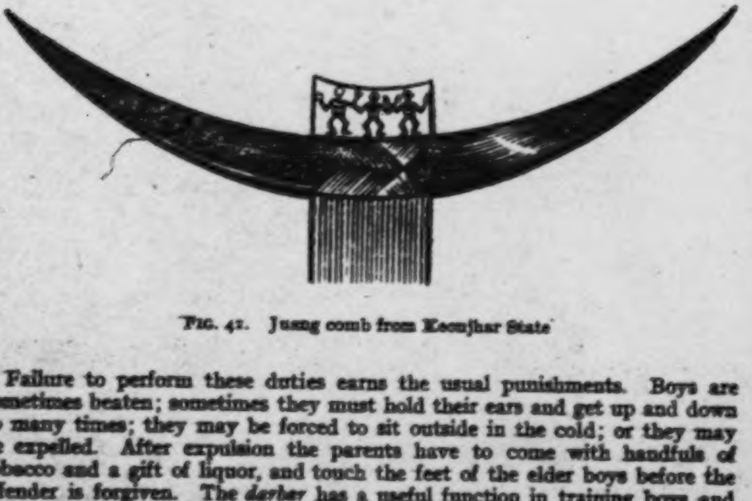

FIG. 42. Juang comb from Keonjhar State

Failure to perform these duties earns the usual punishments. Boys are sometimes beaten; sometimes they must hold their ears and get up and down so many times; they may be forced to sit outside in the cold; or they may be expelled. After expulsion the parents have to come with handfuls of tobacco and a gift of liquor, and touch the feet of the elder boys before the offender is forgiven. The *darbar* has a useful function in training boys and girls in habits of discipline and obedience, in developing their social conscience and in making them alert and clean.

As in Bastar, the Juang dormitory has an important influence on art and music. In many villages beams and pillars are elaborately carved with elephants, hunting and dancing scenes, female figures and rows of women's breasts.[1] Boys are inspired to decorate beautiful little combs as presents for

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[1] As, for example, in the dormitories at Guptaganga, Burhigarh, Bali and Khajurbani.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Kharia AW36

the *dhāngri*. The door into the sacred and reserved part of the dormitory is often well carved with conventional patterns. Where the *darbar* has disappeared, as in Pal Lahara, there is a corresponding decline in the aesthetic sensibility of the tribe.

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Even more important is the *darbar*'s influence in preserving tribal dancing. In Dhenkanal, where the dormitory has collapsed before the spread of education, the Juang have abandoned their beautiful and characteristic dances and adopted those of their low-caste Hindu neighbours. But in Keonjhar, the walls of every *darbar* are hung with *chāng* guitars, and in some villages are preserved the very long (up to nine feet) *māndar* drums used for festivals. In fine weather, almost every night the girls come to the dancing-ground, which is invariably made in front of the *darbar*, and dance with the boys. Both boys and girls go out separately on dancing expeditions to other villages, and many love-affairs and marriages result. Indeed, according to one legend of its origin, the *darbar* came into being when Rusi (founder of the tribe) taught his sons and daughters to dance.

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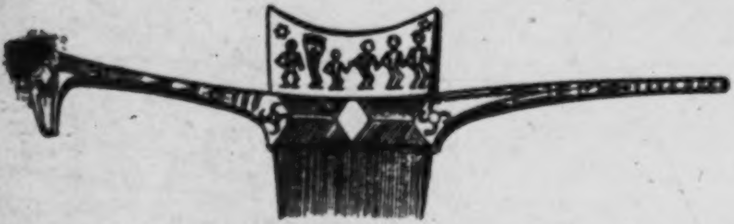

FIG. 43. Juang comb from Bali, Keonjhar State

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The relationship between the boys and girls of the dormitories is complicated by the fact that originally the Juang had a system of territorial exogamy, whereby each village was occupied by one clan only and thus boys and girls seeking amorous adventure or regular marriage had to find it outside the boundaries of their own homes. This meant that the *darbar*, like the Hill Maria ghotul, became an exclusively male institution, taboo to the women and girls of its own village not for any magico-religious reason but for fear of clan-incest. At the same time there grew up a system of ceremonial exchange of visits between the dormitories of different villages which seems to have aimed at promoting an intimacy that would lead to marriage. Boys would visit a village where the girls were of a marriageable clan, stay in their dormitory for three or four days, dance with them and ultimately marry them. The girls would return the visits, dance with the boys in front of the *darbar* and retire to sleep in the girls' dormitory, where they might be visited by the boys.

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But gradually this tidy arrangement broke down and today few Juang villages are the exclusive possession of one clan. Out of 100 marriages examined, in 23 cases men had married girls of their own villages. This has meant, of course, that where there are girls of other clans in the *dhāngri-bāsa*, the whole atmosphere is changed. The boys and girls of the same village can dance together freely and there is no longer a taboo on intimacy. But the *darbar* has retained its integrity and the taboo on women has survived the reason for its existence. The rule now permits boys to visit the *dhāngri-bāsa*, but prohibits girls from sleeping in the *darbar*. At the end of a

Kharia AW36
Bhuiya AW38

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dance boys and girls retire to their separate houses, and then any boys belonging to the right clans go to the girls' house and ask for tobacco. The girls let them in and massage and entertain them: not infrequently they spend the night together. But I have been told that there is a rule that a boy must on no account have intercourse daily: he should not attempt it, at least with the same girl, more than once in four or six days.

The realities of life in the Juang dormitories can be most clearly seen in a few extracts from Juang life-histories. Thus Bhudwa, the Dihuri (priest) of Kordagi (Keonjhar State) describes how

> when I was about ten years old I went to sleep in the *mandagarh*. My father made me a *chāng* drum and I worshipped it. At night when we finished dancing we used to go to the girls' house and they used to massage our arms and legs. At festivals the girls used to cook food for us and bring it to the *darbar*: the *bhendia* would collect a little money and give it to the girls. Each of us gave his own *dhāngri* a comb, ring, and necklace. I had two girls with whom I exchanged presents. When we went to dance in other villages—I used to go to Kajuria and Banspal—we used to take parched rice and ornaments for the girls there. On our way home the girls would stop us and sing songs and we made flower-friendships. I was very shy at first, but in my second year when the girls came with presents to dance in our village I slept with two of them.

Bangru of Nawagaon (Pal Lahara State) remembered a time when the dormitory was more flourishing in the State than it is today. He described how a group of girls came to his house when he was about ten years old and said, 'Come to dance and sing and sleep in the dormitory'. Soon afterwards he broke a drum and had to pay a fine of eight annas in liquor. 'I had affairs with four or five girls after the dances were done. Now I am old, but when I see the boys and girls meeting in the dance, my youthful memories return and I want to laugh.' Gelu of Badhimarra had his first girl in the *dhāngribāsa* when he was about fourteen. 'I made love to her with parched rice. How sweet it was! But when it was over everything went dark around me.' Basu of Rangmatiya was approached, most improperly, by a girl while he was sleeping in the *darbar*. He refused her and she made him impotent by her magic. Ratna of Khajuria said, 'I loved playing on the *chāng* and dancing. One day I made a splendid comb and stuck it in my girl's hair during a dance. She fell in love with me and we ran away together.'

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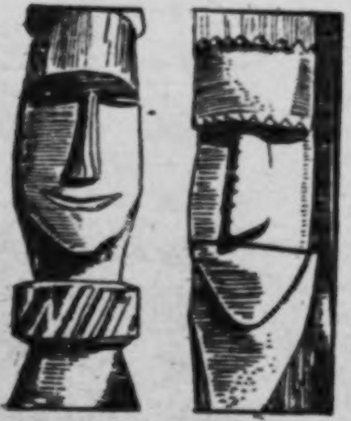

FIG. 44. Carving on a pillar in the Bhuiya dormitory at Nagira

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Of the 100 marriages I examined, 23 were the result of dancing expeditions, 4 were 'serving marriages', 4 were 'Paithu'—where the girl came forcibly into a youth's house, and 69 were of the regular type negotiated by the parents.

Kharia AW36
Bhuiya AW28

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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584

In 32 cases, boys married their mother's brother's daughters. 31 confessed to prenuptial intimacy with their future wives.

Only 2 per cent of the marriages ended in divorce, yet another confirmation of the fact that the dormitory usually co-exists with a tradition of the highest marital stability.

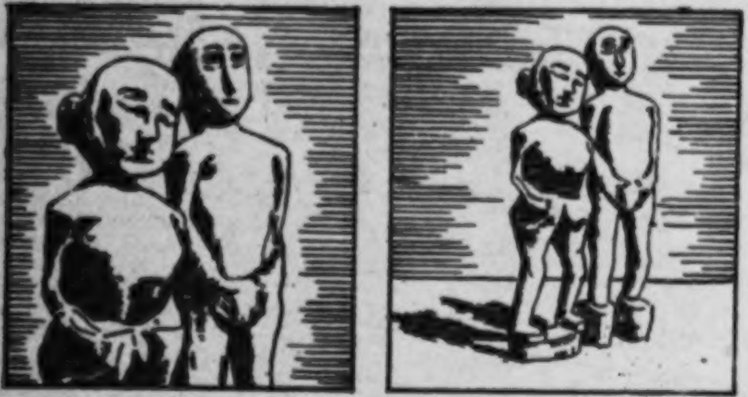

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FIG. 45. Wooden figures of Dihuri (village priest) and his wife on the verandah of the Bhuiya dormitory at Talapeda

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[532]

I visited, and stayed in, many Bhuiya dormitories in the Bonai, Keonjhar and Pal Lahara States in November and December 1942. The building is usually smaller than among the Keonjhar Juang, but it is well-made and cosy, situated in the heart of the village, and has a good dancing-ground and the pillar of Gram Siri (the Village Mother) in front of it. Inside the walls are decorated with the horns of deer and many drums: at Phuljhar I found an elaborate tiger trap: in many villages the apparatus of the Karam Festival is kept in a sort of loft. As with the Juang, the dormitory is the centre of such artistic creation as there is: at Koira (Pal Lahara) there was a beautifully carved door; at Raisua (Bonai) the main pillar had remarkable carvings of a Bhuiya woman with her husband who was represented as a fish; on the verandah of the *darbar* at Talapeda (Keonjhar) were wooden images of the Dihuri and his wife made as a compliment by a party of visitors.

In Bonai, the foundation of the *darbar* was associated with dancing.

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> Boram Budha taught us to cut forest clearings and when the crop was ready showed us how to make rice-beer. Boram and his wife were drunk: he beat his chest like a drum and his wife danced before him. Then the boys also beat their chests and the girls danced for them. After this Boram Budha made an iron *chhing* and a house where the boys and girls could live.

Another tale of origin is connected with the desire that children should not share their parents' bedroom.

> Long ago, Boram Budha and Boram Budhi taught their children to dance saying, 'We ourselves did this when we were young'. Then Boram Budha said, 'How can I sleep in the presence of all these children?'

Bhuiya AW28
Kandh AW35

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> So he made a special house for them, and gave the girls a room in a widow's house. Whenever the boys beat their *chāng* drums, the girls came out to dance. So now in Boram Budha's name, we build the *darbar*, and dance, sing and worship.

Every boy must be a member of the *darbar* and every girl of the *dhāngri-bāsa*. When a boy gets old enough, the Naik (head) of the *darbar* says to him, 'Come and play the *chāng* with us, play games with us, and sleep with the other boys in the *darbar*'. The little boy comes with a bottle of liquor and makes himself a member. Titles are not given, but a leader 'who sits like a Raja' is appointed. Duties, punishments and expeditions are the same as among the Juang. At a marriage, the elder boys give a feast and a pot of rice-beer to the younger as a reward for their many services. When a boy is married, the other boys give him a mat saying, 'You lived with us for many days: now take this and be happy'. They escort him to his bride at the end of the wedding and shut him up with her saying, 'Now the burden of a house rests on you. It will not be now as in the days of youth. Now the handcuffs are on you. Use the girl well so that she bear children, many and soon.'

Dalton's account of the Bhuiya dormitory suggests that the youths conduct affairs with girls of their own village (who live in the *dhāngri-bāsa* without, 'strange to say, anyone to look after them') as well as with those of other villages whom they visit on 'the more exciting and exhilarating occasions' of the ceremonial dances. Dalton has given a delightful account of these and observes that the Bhuiya girls have 'certainly more wit, more romance, and more poetry in their composition than is usually found amongst the country folk in India'.[1]

It will be seen therefore that the *darbar* is as important for the Bhuiya as for the Juang. It is a social temple, the centre of village life, from which radiate many types of healthful and creative activity.

The Bhuiya or Bhuinhar of Udaipur State do not appear to have the dormitory, though a tribe with which they were amalgamated at the 1921 Census, the very interesting Pando, maintain a *bhangra* for boys and *dorwa kuria* for girls. W. H. Shoobert has described his visit to these dormitories.

> They were small and clean huts capable of holding about six people each and the two which I saw, one for men and one for girls, each had a couple of cots in them. There were several bachelors' quarters in the village because the huts were not very large. If a boy is absent from his quarters for five consecutive nights a panchayat is held to inquire into his conduct.[2]

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I found that both the Kuttia Kond of north-western Baliguda and the Dongaria Kond living round the Nimgiri Mountain[3] had dormitories (*dhangra-ilu* for boys and *dhangri-ilu* for girls), but not in a very fully developed form. Sometimes there was a separate house as at Kuchchili, but more often boys and girls had small rooms set apart for them in the long line of village houses. A curious feature of the Kond system is that there are usually two or more boys' dormitories in a village—the boys are divided sometimes by clans,

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[1] Dalton, op. cit., pp. 142ff.

[2] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 421.

[3] In the company of H. V. Blackburn I visited Kuttia villages—Rajam, Susabeta, Sapar, Rangapara and Bikapanga—in a tour from 24 November to 4 December 1943, and saw Dongaria Kond villages—Munda, Suttanguni, Denguni, Dhaminpanga, Kuchchili, Ambdhoni and Tenda—from 5 to 9 December 1943. Later I visited Kond villages in the lower reaches of the Machkund River and, in January 1945, Kond villages of Bodo Kimidi and the Gunupur Taluk.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond

Naga AR13
Kalyo-Kengyu

Plate LXI

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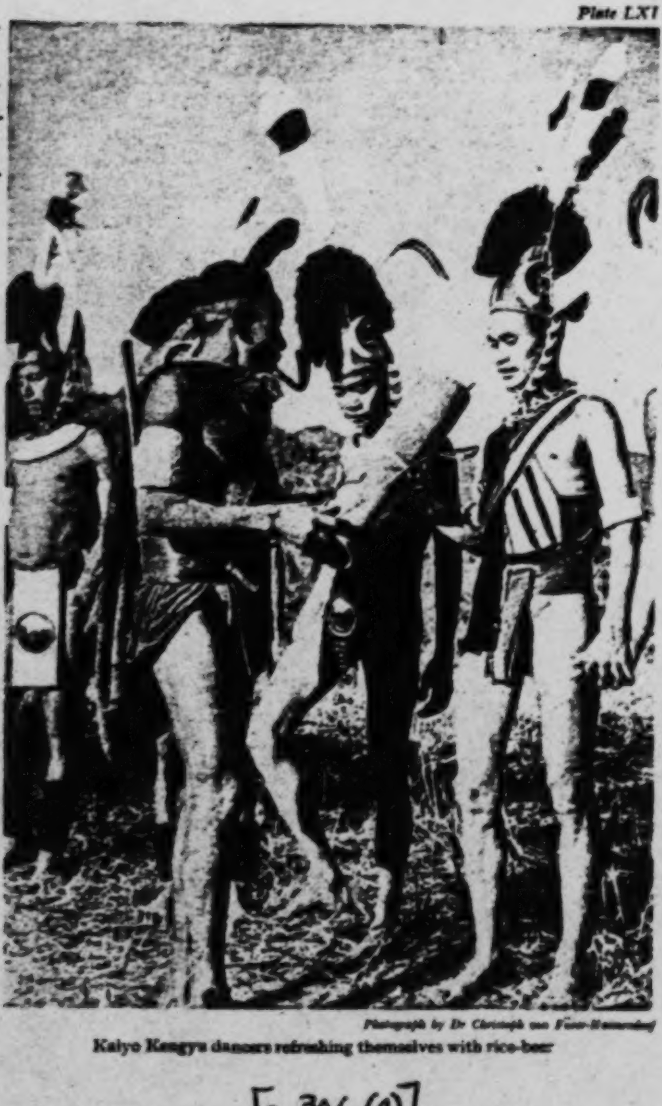

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Kalyo Kengyu dancers refreshing themselves with rice-beer

[p. 306 (A)]

Bondo AW30

Plate LXII

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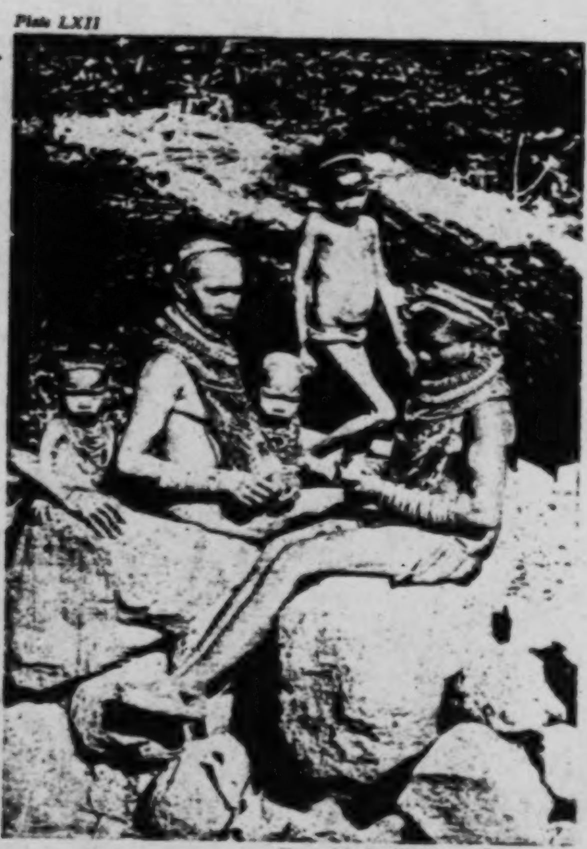

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Bondo girls

[p.306(B)]

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x 171
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sometimes according to the villages where their *future* wives are living. The girls' dormitory seems to be more fully elaborated and in several villages I noticed that it was the centre of great activity and frequently visited by boys as well as girls.

The Kuttia name for an unmarried boy is *ravinja*, for a girl *rasha*. At Susabeta, there were a number of officers—the Manjhi-dhangra who is the head of both girls and boys and organizes the entire junior life of the village; the Dolai, his assistant, who is responsible for discipline and fines; the Jani, who sees to the supply of wood and leaves and arranges supplies for feasts; and the Rawat, who attends to visitors and arranges labour and food for visiting officials. The girl officers, I understood, took the same names with a feminine termination—Manjhi-aru, Dolai-aru. In this village the girls do not go to sleep in the dormitory until after puberty.

B
[532
831]

At Rangaparu, there were small dormitories on both sides of the great village court. Both boys and girls took their titles from the village where their betrotheds were living. Thus among the boys one was named Kanjikorenja, one Bikapanga, another Batiparenja—all names of villages. Similarly girls were Naju-aru, Sakubicha-aru, Timba-aru, Minda-aru.

Between the boys and girls there does not seem to be any organised relationship as in Bastar; this is specially the case in smaller villages where all the people belong to the same clan. But where it is possible, boys give rings and combs to the girls and sometimes marry their dormitory lovers. At the Pus Punni festival (January) the boys give the girls a formal present of a cow or goat; in Phag (February) the girls make an offering in return, generally a barren sow which only boys can eat. For a week before the festival the boys beg supplies of grain and mahua from the villagers. Boys and girls dance for two or three days and it is said that great sexual liberty prevails.

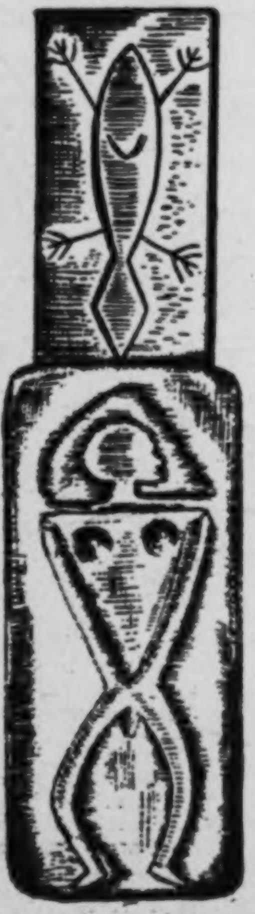

FIG. 46. Bhuiya carving on a pillar of the dormitory at Raisua of male and female symbols

Dalton describes how every Kond village has separate dormitories for bachelors and maidens: 'as it is said that chastity is not one of their virtues and that free intercourse between the sexes is not discouraged, it may be assumed that the separation is not very rigidly enforced'. The girls' dormitories are 'under charge of an elderly matron, who sleeps inside and locks the door. She sleeps very sound, I dare say'.[1]

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[1] Dalton, op. cit., p. 295.

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In several of the centre houses in the Dongaria Kond villages round Nimgiri, houses whose purpose is somewhat obscure but which may be god-houses used by boys to sleep in, I noticed women's breasts carved in pairs on the cross-beams in exactly the same style as in the Juang dormitories of Keonjhar. Some of the boys, however, reminded me rather of Bastar; their bead ornaments were similar and they had the 'dolled-up' over-dressed appearance so characteristic of the Jhoria Muria.

In the Machkund valley, the dormitories were in the midst of the villages, small houses deserted by other people. But the relations of boys and girls were obviously friendly: there was a lot of flirting during a dance that closely resembled the Hulki, and boys with their arms round their girls' shoulders stood listening to our gramophone just as in Bastar.

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A strange and rather pathetic legend about the origin of tobacco, from the Kond village Meriahpatta (Koraput District) throws some light on dormitory life in former times.

> At one time boys and girls used to sleep together in the dormitory. A rich man's daughter was dying for love; she loved a poor Kond boy. They slept together in the dormitory but they did not lie together. One day the girl said, 'Come to me'. But the boy said, 'We are of the same clan; how can we?' But the girl gave him no peace; she was always begging him to lie with her. Then one day people came from another village to betroth her in marriage to a youth. She said, 'I will not marry; do not speak for me to anyone'. She said, 'If you must marry me, then marry me to the one I will name'. And she gave the name of the boy she loved. 'But how can you marry him? He is of the same clan.' The girl said, 'We were all born of one brother and sister; so what harm is there when we have different parents?'
>
> The villagers called the boy and asked him if he would marry the girl. He refused. 'I must marry a girl from another village, not my own.' So neither of them married. Soon the girl died. A few days afterwards the boy went to the forest for wood and leaves. On his way back in the evening, he passed by her grave. He saw a lovely flower growing from the grave. He picked it and smelt it; the scent was so good that it made him drunk. He lay down to sleep and when he got up all his weariness was gone.
>
> The next day he picked another flower and leaves and put them in his bed and slept with them. The scent quickly put him to sleep. In a dream the girl came to him. She laughed at him saying, 'I said all that for love of you, yet you did not listen and refused to marry me. Why have you brought me to your bed today? Get up and lie with me. I will come every night to your bed. If you do not tumble me, I will destroy you.'
>
> The boy got up and there the girl was, sitting on his bed. He tumbled her, and then every night she was a girl and every day a scented flower. She said, 'I died unmarried, sobbing *halap-halap*. Now all men will desire me'. There were no seeds then. But the boy died and they buried him in the same grave and after that there were seeds. The flower spread all over the world from Chandrapore and now men cannot live without it.

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The Gadaba have preserved the dormitory in their remoter villages; I saw something of it in villages to the west of the Machkund River in January 1944

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and February and March 1945.[1] Groups of boys and girls are generally housed separately in any available buildings, but in some places cosy little huts, less than six feet high, are made of grass and plastered over with mud. These tiny nests, piled with soft grass, are entered by a minute door through which the *four* or five boy or girl members must crawl. Warm and comfortable, they are specially made for the cold weather.

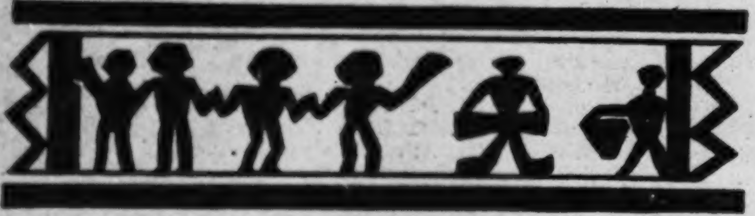

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FIG. 47. Kond girls and boys performing a dance similar to the Muria Hulki
(From a wood-carving at Totaguda in the Machkund valley)

The boys and girls do not have special titles, but are organized and disciplined under the leadership of a youth called the Bise, who is sometimes known as the Dhangra Panjihar, the priest of the unmarried. The Bise is a very important person in Gadaba society. It is he who arranges dances and dancing expeditions; he provides parties of girls and boys to work in the fields; he looks after visiting officials; he conducts the special ceremonies of youth. Nothing can be done without him, as the visitor to a Gadaba village quickly finds.

Like the Juang, the Gadaba were originally organized on a system of village exogamy which is now breaking down. Those villages which have retained the principle do not, of course, allow intimate relations between their members, instead boys and girls go regularly to visit other villages. But where members of more than one clan live together, the boys spend a lot of time every evening in the girls' dormitory.

Every year there are official dancing expeditions at the end of the Pus Parab festival. Special dancing-sticks are cut under the direction of the Bise. The Sisa (village priest) offers an egg on the path along which the boys and girls will go and on their return performs other rites to free them from any possible magical infection from outside. No girl in her menstrual period may accompany the party. There must be no quarrels; disputes are punished with a fine. When the dancers reach the village they have planned to visit, they first perform in front of the Sisa's house and then before the *sodor* (the stone platform of the elders). They are given substantial presents of rice and a goat. On their return they erect the branch of a cotton tree and hang their sticks on it. After this begins the season of stick-dancing in their own village. A fire is lit every night before the *sodor*; on the first night the x G 883 x171 Ga 883 Bise must prepare it. In addition to this formal and ritual expedition, boys and girls often go seperately throughout the year to visit other dormitories; when boys go they are received by the girls, they dance and play together, form flower-friendships and sometimes arrange marriages.

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[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf generously put at my disposal the preliminary field-notes of his visit to the same area three years previously. My own record of Bondo and Gadaba life was made independently and I have been glad to find how far our conclusions have coincided. Fürer-Haimendorf has given an excellent brief account of the two tribes in 'Megalithic Ritual among the Gadabas and Bondos of Orissa', *JRAS Beng.*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 149-78.

Gadaba dancing is beautiful to watch and has the variety and excitement of the best Muria dancing, a sure sign that the dormitory is alive. One of the girls' dances imitates the various duties of every-day; the girls pretend to cow-dung the floor, throw away rubbish, bring water, bathe, cook and serve the food. Another resembles the Muria Hulki. The stick dances are even more elaborate and amusing than the Muria's.

Boy and girl members of the dormitory, instructed by the Bise, play an important part on many ceremonial occasions. At a marriage the boys attend the bridegroom and girls escort the bride to her new home. The boys play their part in the ritual hunts. At festivals the girls must help in preparing rice-beer and make leaf-cups and platters. The Bise is largely responsible for the conduct of the worship of Bor Gumang. If a hen addles its eggs, only the dormitory boys may kill and eat it. On the last day of the Pus Parab festival, boys and girls collect food from the villagers and catch fish and crabs in the nearest stream. While the girls prepare a feast, the boys fetch the branch of a semur tree which they plant in the middle of the path. The Sisa makes the customary sacrifices and the girls bring cooked fish or crabs and offer it to the tree. Then the Sisa first, and after him all the boys, shoot arrows at the tree. If their aim is good, they will have good hunting in the coming year.

x G x883 x171 Ga 883 796 But the most important festival of the boys and girls is the Ongon or Kakri Gota. Every October the village headmen go to Jeypore (the headquarters of the area) for the Dassera festival. On the day they return, the girls catch a cockroach in their dormitory, tie it up with grass from the roof and hang it to a bamboo pole. Two girls shoulder the pole and followed by boys and girls weeping as at a funeral, go in procession to the cockroach's cremation-stone (*sāro-raisang*). They put the cockroach on the stone, make a little pyre of sticks and grass and two boys set fire to it at 'head and feet'. As the flames leap up, one of the girls removes a ring from her finger and throws it on the fire. Afterwards the Bise recovers it and wears it himself. The girls go weeping to the *sodor*, sit there for a time and then go home.

Ga [773] The Gadaba are rather obscure about the meaning of this. 'The cockroach is the grandfather of the boys and girls.' There is a vague legend that the first boy and girl were born from a cockroach. It is possible that the creature symbolizes any children who have died as members of the dormitory. For, a month later, its obsequies are performed. When the harvest is done, in the bright full moon of Aghan (November-December), the boys and girls celebrate the Ongon Gota, when they raise a menhir at the *sodor* in honour of their dead Grandfather Cockroach (*sāro-dādi*). The girls and boys prepare as much rice-beer as they can. On the morning of the ceremony they go singing together to catch crabs. The Bise throws a little rice into the stream in the name of Grandfather Cockroach saying, 'If there is truth with Grandfather Cockroach, let us find crabs quickly'. The first crab is put aside and when they have caught sufficient they take them to the Bise's house. The boys go to find a stone, beating their drums. They bring it to the *sodor* where they are joined by the girls carrying a pot of rice-beer. They all cry together, 'O Grandfather Cockroach, accept our beer', and one of them puts a little on the top of the stone. They erect it near the *sodor* and the Bise cries, 'O Grandfather Cockroach, we do this for you. Let there be no quarrels among us.

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Let us dance and be happy. If visitors come from another village, let there be no quarrels. Keep far away fever and disaster. As we go through the jungle let there be no bear or tiger and let not our toes hit against the stones.'

The boys go again with their drums into the forest and now bring two branches of a cotton tree. They plant them near the *sodor* and to the first the Bise ties a crab and a pumpkin and to the second a cucumber. They drink the beer and begin to dance round the trees. Anyone has the right to steal the crab and eat it. Directly someone takes it, the boys cry, 'Someone has stolen our buffalo; tie up another'. Gradually all the crabs are tied up and stolen one by one. The boys and girls dance all night and next morning the Bise cuts up the cucumber and pumpkin; everyone grabs a bit and runs away.

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On the general atmosphere of the Gadaba village Fürer-Haimendorf says, in a sentence which I entirely endorse, 'The spirit of camaraderie between girls and boys is evident even to the casual observer. Indeed their gay and unself-conscious behaviour at feasts and dances reminded me of the happy atmosphere among Naga youths'.[1]

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The character of the Bondo dormitory depends on certain tribal principles, that none of the descendants of the original settlers of a village should intermarry, that therefore, as a general rule, girls and boys must seek their life-partners outside and that parents should allow their children an astonishing freedom of choice in settling their own affairs. The original Bondo dormitory was apparently a sort of matrimonial agency. There are no signs that it was ever a central institution, filled with magic power, where tribal affairs were conducted. It did not exist to promote the arts of recreation, for the girls and boys of the village could have little to do with each other. It was not a village guest-house, for there were rarely any guests. Its aim was marriage. It was the instrument by which a tribe which believed in giving full freedom to its children expressed its policy.

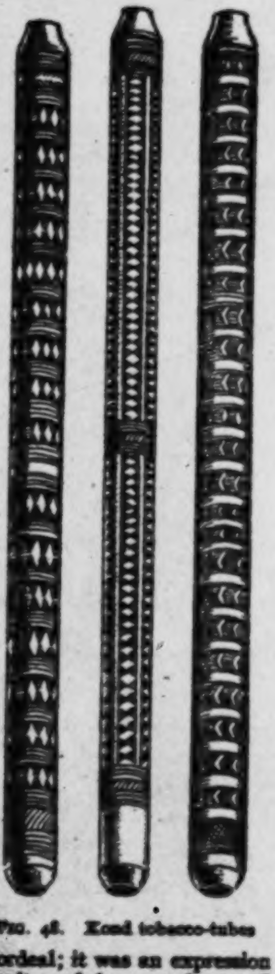

Fig. 48. Kond tobacco-tubes

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The classical Bondo dormitory was a sort of ordeal; it was an expression of the Test-Theme motif of the folk-tale. It was a pit, roofed over and entered

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[1] Fürer-Haimendorf has given an account of this ceremony (op. cit., pp. 158f.) which confirms at many points my own description, but he misses the motif of the cockroach and pays, I venture to think, a little too much attention to the crab as associated with death. Crabs are used in all Orissa festivals as an inexpensive substitute for animals. Here they are obviously a substitute for buffaloes. In Drug I found the 'ten-legged' crab offered as a substitute for the 'two-legged' human sacrifice.

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by a tiny door, where the girls lived and entertained boy visitors from other villages. It corresponded to the Under World where the hero had to go to win his bride. Here he was tested, and so was she; if they passed the test a life-long relation was established.

I was unable to see any specimen of the older pit-dormitory, though I visited many Bondo settlements during tours in 1943, 1944 and 1945; indeed I doubt if they exist, though I heard rumours of them. But I was able to record a number of descriptions of what they were like. At Dumiripada I was told

> We used to dig out a large pit at Dassera time and roof it over with bamboo, matting and palm-leaves. We covered it with earth, smoothed it down and cowdunged it. There was a small hole as door with a bamboo shutter and a bamboo ladder to climb up and down. Before it was used the Sisa had to sacrifice a hen and a pig inside the pit and sprinkle the blood over it and on the roof.[1]

Another, fuller, account was given in Andrahal where I was shown the site and certain relics of the old pit.

> Since they could not marry in their own villages, how were the girls to get husbands? It is no good marrying unless a girl and boy like one another; otherwise they will be unfaithful and tigers will destroy us. So we made a separate place for the girls to which boys could come and dance and play, sleep and get to know them.
>
> It was Mahapurub himself who made the first pit. Before houses were built Mahapurub lived in such a place. One day when the boys were hunting they saw the pit and thought, 'If we make such a pit we will not feel cold' and so they made one to use in the winter months. But when they first dug the pit, great rocks used to come out. Then Bursung gave the Sisa a dream: 'Sacrifice in my name and the pit will be ready.' After that we never made a pit without giving an egg to Bursung and a fowl to Hundi. When a new pit was made the girls had a feast and the Sisa (but not the boys of the village) shared it. An old woman used to go with the girls and stay with them until they wanted to sleep. Then she would climb out, close the door with a big stone and go to her house. In the early morning she would return, remove the stone and let the girls out.

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In this pit the girls used to sleep from October onwards for about six months. It was obviously a cold-weather barracks, hardly suitable for the heat or rains. During these months boys of other villages were free to visit them. They would come to the pit; if the door was shut—it is noticeable that it was always shut from the outside—they would remove the stone and climb down into the cosy firelight. They would sing and play with the girls and then often spend the night with them.

If a boy was specially attracted by one of the girls, he would persuade his friends to come again and again. Then, I was told at Andrahal,

> The boy says to himself, 'Does this girl like me or not?' He lights a leaf in the fire and burns her as she sits by him. If she is unwilling she abuses him and goes to the other side of the fire. But if she likes him she says nothing, but quietly herself lights a leaf and burns him.

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[1] *There is an account of this pit, written in the patronising tone characteristic of the time, by* J. A. May, '*Notes on the Bhondas of Jeypur*', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II (1873), pp. 237ff.

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> He must not make a sound. Sometimes they burn each other with bits of bamboo. Then the boy makes another test. He takes a bangle or ring and offers it to her, catching her by the hand. If she accepts it, they are betrothed. The boy goes home and tells his father. He says, 'Do what you will, my son, if you are happy'.

There then follow the complicated economic transactions of the betrothal and finally the marriage in which the boy and girl members of the dormitories take a leading part.

The pit-dormitory came to an end, not as the result of any 'reform' but for an entirely practical cause. It was found to be too risky to keep the girls out on the outskirts of a village near a jungle full of wild beasts. There are many different tales of the tragedy that led to a change of custom. At Dumiripada I was told

> Boys came here from another village. They danced and played with the girls. They were sleeping together. One was wakeful and went out to piss. A tiger came by and killed him.

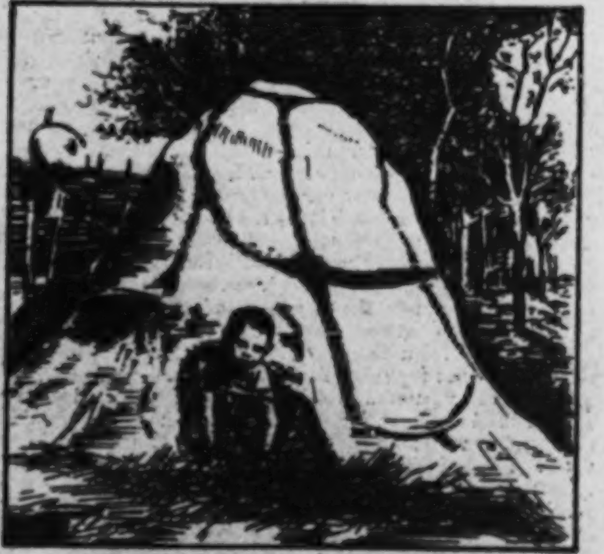

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Fig. 49. A Gadaba winter-dormitory

(See p. 309)

But at Tulaguram they said that

> One evening the girls were very late getting their food and when they went to the pit, there was a tiger waiting. As they were climbing down, it sprang on them and carried one of them off. That very night the Sisa of Hundi Deo had a dream that it was not safe to put the girls in a pit; they must have a special house inside the village.

Most tragic of all is the story from Salanpada.

> At Salanpada when the girls were sleeping, the old woman who looked after them went away and forgot to shut the door. The tiger came and crouched by the opening. A girl went out to piss, she saw the tiger and thought it was a dog and tried to drive it away. But the tiger sprang on her and they both fell into the pit. The tiger killed most of the girls but two or four escaped by pretending to be dead. In the morning, when the old woman came, she saw the tiger and ran for help. The villagers came with their bows and arrows and killed it and when they opened the roof they found only three girls alive. Since then we have kept the girls in a house inside the village.

Today the Bondo girls live in any small house that may be available. They often have some old woman to look after them, and there does not seem to be any ban—as there is in Bastar—on a widow or a woman forsaken by her husband living with the unmarried girls. The boys have another house, but it is the girls' dormitory that is important.[1] The centre of the male life of the village is the stone platform, the *sindibor*. The boys' houses are only the base-camps for adventure, from which they go out in search of love and happiness. The old tradition has survived the collapse of the old underground buildings. Parties of excited happy boys (usually, but not necessarily of other clans) still come from other villages to dance and sing. The girls have palm wine ready for them and the boys bring necklaces, rings and mats; many Bondo boys have bunches of little rings always hanging at their belts. Girls and boys sit round the house in the warmth of the fire and sing to one another; some of the music is exquisite—I shall never forget the beauty of the girls' songs at midnight in Bandapara. A boy may play the flute, a girl the Jew's-harp. My wife, who spent many evenings in the *selani dingo*, tells me that the evening programme is hilarious, but usually indoors. The Bondo are not good dancers; they have none of the various turns and paces of their neighbours the Gadaba; and they do not seem specially fond of dancing. But they love sitting round and making jokes.

Since the ultimate aim of the Bondo dormitory is matrimony, this fact dominates the relations between the girls and their boy visitors. Here is a striking contrast to the situation in the ghotul. Ghotul relationships should never lead to marriage; *ingersin* relationships should never lead to anything else. The Muria allow parents absolute authority, the Bondo allow children absolute freedom, in the choice of partners. The Muria forbid intimacy between engaged couples; the Bondo only permit it after the betrothal has been ratified. Premarital pregnancies are a serious, if not very common, problem to the Muria; they seem remarkably rare among the Bondo. Greatest difference of all, the Bondo seem but rarely to indulge in pre-nuptial intercourse. There is some laxity at the great festivals, when a girl may steal a boy's cloth and not return it to him until he pays her the tribute of intimacy, but in the dormitories, although the boys may fondle the girls' breasts and flirt outrageously, intercourse is regarded as a very serious thing; it suggests that one has definite intentions; it is not permitted lightly; and more than one over-daring youth has had his head broken by an outraged dormitory maiden.

The organization and discipline of the dormitories is not highly developed. I have not found any leader comparable to the Gadaba Bise or Muria Kotwar.

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[1] The girls' house is called *selani dingo* or *dungo*; *dingo* is the name for the old pit. The boys' house is *ingersin*, but it is now often called simply by the Oriya name *basa*.

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Neither girls nor boys are given titles. On the other hand, they are expected to work, sometimes for the village elders, always for visitors. Boys assist at marriages, funerals and the ritual hunts; girls prepare leaf-cups and platters and cook and brew rice-beer for marriages, funerals and festivals. During the Pus Parab festival, two unmarried boys have ritual duties throughout the long-drawn ceremonial. Boys go to fetch a bride and girls escort her to her new home. Boys and girls together attend to the consummation of a marriage.

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Fürer-Haimendorf summarizes the importance of the Bondo system. 'To the Bondo who must find his mates in other villages, the friendships made in the *selani dingo* are the only conceivable avenue to marriage and any breakdown of the dormitory system would be tantamount to a revolution of his social life; indeed it is probable that in the place of mutual attraction, family interests and considerations of wealth would become the decisive factors in the conclusion of marriages.' 'The dormitory system of the Bondos is not only of the highest value for the regulation of family and social life, but acts also as a stimulant to economic activities.' [1]

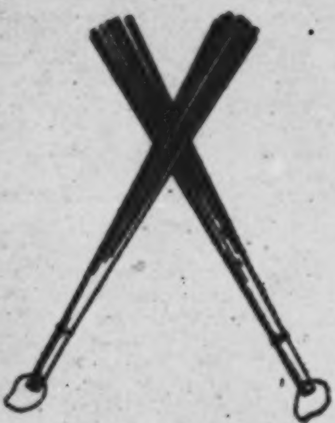

FIG. 50. Gadaba dancing-sticks
Length 21"
(See p. 309)

The Jhoria, Didai and Parenga have dormitories which appear to be on the same lines as those of the Gadaba, but I did not have opportunity to examine them in detail. At Patarput, Gangapada and Bhajurguda the Didai dormitory seemed to be in a flourishing condition; the boys' dancing had attained a high degree of technical perfection, and there was that general atmosphere of courtesy, simplicity and service that characterizes all villages where the dormitory system exists in its integrity.

South India

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The dormitory was probably distributed fairly widely among the tribes of South India, but our records of these peoples are imperfect and only of a few can its existence be affirmed. In Travancore, it is said that each Muthuvan, Mannan and Paliyan village has separate dormitories for boys and girls. The institution 'is an important means of preserving social life'.[2] The 'bachelors' hall' of the Kanikkar serves a threefold purpose: it is a home for the unmarried boys and taboo to women; it is used to accommodate visitors, and it serves as a village council hall. Unmarried girls have a separate establishment. The

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[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'Avenues to Marriage among the Bondos of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), p. 172. Fürer-Haimendorf says that 'Bondo marriages are easily dissolved'; out of 1,000 marriages examined by me in 1945, 5 had ended in divorce—this is double the Muria rate.

[2] L. A. Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes* (Trivandrum, 1937), Vol. III, p. 72.

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dormitory here, says Krishna Iyer, 'is undergoing a process of decay'.[1] Of the Mannan, the same writer says, 'sexual licence before marriage is neither recognised nor tolerated. All the unmarried young men are kept in a dormitory for the night, while all the maidens are housed in another dormitory and are in charge of an elderly woman. After supper, both boys and girls go to their respective dormitories'.[2] The Kadu Kuruba of Mysore have the same custom: there are separate huts for youths and girls, 'both under the eye of the headman'. The youths' hut is called *pundungar chavadi*, 'the abode of the vagabonds'.[3]

The dormitory has also been reported for the Kota,[4] but it does not exist among the Toda.

The Central Provinces

The difficulty of putting the ghotul in its proper historical perspective is illustrated by the fact that we have only two or three meagre and obscure references to it in all the literature of the Central Provinces. Hislop mentions it, deriving the word *gotalghar* from *kotal*, a led horse, and *ghar*, a house[5]; this suggests that the stress was then on the ghotul as a rest-house for travellers, which was occupied by the young men when no one was there. In the east of Chanda District, he says, 'bothies for bachelors are universal'.

Russell and Hiralal say, on what evidence I do not know, that 'many Gond villages in Chhattisgarh and the Feudatory States have what is known as a *gotalghar*. This is a large house near the village where unmarried youths and maidens collect and dance and sing together at night. Some villages have two, one for the boys and one for the girls'.[6] There follows an excellent brief account of the Bastar ghotul. The *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer* describes the Gond of Kanker State as allowing their girls and boys to have 'their separate sleeping barracks outside the village' where they meet nightly to play and dance and sing.[7] Grigson doubts whether the ghotul exists anywhere among the Gond of the Satpura mountains and other parts of the Central Provinces, including Chhattisgarh, though he says that he was told by 'an intelligent Gond' on the Nagpur-Chhindwara border that 'he had heard many years ago that some such thing existed somewhere beyond Deogarh in Chhindwara District'.[8]

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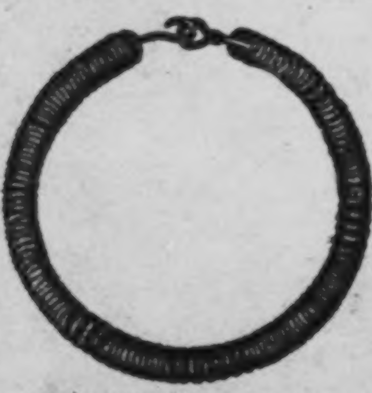

FIG. 51. Bondo girl's neck-band
(See p. 314)

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[1] L. A. Krishna Iyer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 9. See also E. J. Macfarlane, 'Hill Tribes and Fisherfolk of Travancore', *Man*, 1933.
[2] Ibid., 'The Mannans of Travancore', *J. Anth. S. Bom.*, Vol. XIII, p. 137.
[3] L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, 'Kadu Kurubas', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 229.
[4] M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132. [5] Hislop, op. cit., p. 3.
[6] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 131. See also *Census of India*, 1901, Vol. XIII; Part 1, p. 201; A. E. Nelson, *Raipur District Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1909), p. 106; L. F. Begbie, *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 98.
[7] E. A. de Brett, *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1909), passim.
[8] Grigson, op. cit., p. 47.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

Miss D. Bhagwat tells me that she found traces of the ghotul system in the south-eastern corner of the Raipur District and in the Aundhi Zamindari of Drug. But it is now in a decayed condition. 'It is almost gone: the people seem ashamed to own it.' The buildings exist no longer, but the organization and tradition remain. Boys and girls dance and sing together. They go on the Pus Kolang and Hulki expeditions. The boys are instructed in the Karsal-git, secret songs and riddles about death which the girls must not hear. Some sort of sexual initiation is given to both boys and girls.

Recently I found the Bhumia-Baiga youths of Lamni in the Bilaspur District had the custom of sleeping together in an elementary dormitory in someone's house.

In Bastar itself, the Hill Maria have a ghotul in the middle of every village in the Abujhmar Hills. In this the unmarried boys sleep, often on long raised platforms running down one side of the house, married men are segregated when it is taboo for them to be with their wives, and visitors are entertained. So far as I know the Hill Maria ghotul is always of the one-building type. Owing to the fact that 'in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred'[1] and since dancing is taboo for most of the year, there is nothing like the chelik-motiari relationship. Grigson, however, noticed that the Muria type of ghotul was spreading through the Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of the Tapalighum and Behra Mar) Pargana, where in some villages members of more than one clan have settled. The Hill Maria seem generally to give ghotul ranks only to boys, 'the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory'. This sometimes happens among the Muria. Grigson describes how 'at a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyor-gaita* of three village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head-boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhalo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls'.[2] Grigson sums up the aim of the dormitory as

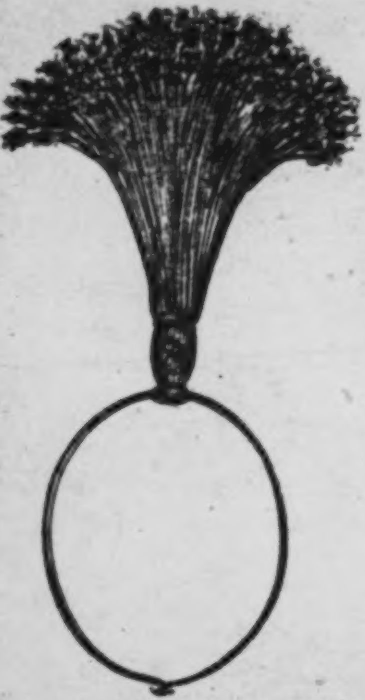

FIG. 52. Bondo boy's head decoration

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[1] Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 267.

[2] Ibid., p. 268.

Muria, Hill Maria
Raj, Bhatra

Bondo AW30

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'a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan'.

There is no sign of the ghotul among Raja Muria and Bhattra. But the Dhurwa preserve a relic of the institution in the custom that sends unmarried boys to sleep in the Thana-gudi (village rest-house) when it is empty and girls to a room in someone's house. At Kachripati a Dhangra-manjhi was appointed to look after both boys and girls. The Bison-horn Maria also have the institution, though in a degenerated form. Grigson did not discover these dormitories and says that the headmen he met at Aranpur and other camps stated that they were a degraded institution.[1] On the other hand, many Maria have told me that they would like to have the fully developed ghotul of the north, but that they fear scandal due to pregnancies and that since a village is generally occupied by members of the same clan, there would be danger of clan-incest. I have found ghotul for both boys and girls in most Bison-horn Maria villages,[2] though the elders always deny that they exist. In every Bison-horn village there is a commodious rest-house for the use of visitors. This is used by the boys as their ghotul. The boys are not fully organized like the Muria chelik; but a leader is appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chota Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with the boys. Absentees are fined. An old Maria Sori Mukha is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the village and it was theirs. Then when Government ordered us to make a rest-house, we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but more often have their own house. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and the girls on the other. Generally, however, women are not segregated in this way during their periods (they occupy a special hut attached to their own houses) and then the unmarried girls have a house to themselves. In either case the boys build the house, and the girls reward them with home-made rice-beer. If the house is used by menstruating women, the boys have to bathe and wash their clothes after thatching the roof.

Both boys and girls have regular duties. Both must take wood to their dormitories, or they are fined. At marriages and funerals, boys and girls must bring wood and make leaf-plates. In the evenings they often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games. But I have not heard that they have any rule of hair-combing or massage. At Palnar a Maria described how 'the boys join the girls' dances, holding the dance-stick with one hand and a girl's breast with the other'.

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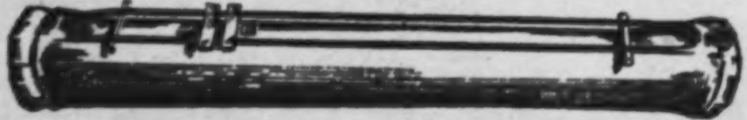

FIG. 53. Bondo bamboo drum

Length 19"

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 122.

[2] I saw *pekang kurma* (girls' houses) at Dugeli, Khutepal, Dualkarka, Lakhepal, Methodi, Surmar, Dodum, Pusham and other villages in 1940-2.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond

Gadaba AW31

Plate LXIII

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Gadaba girls during a dance

Photographs by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Gadaba boys playing on their stringed instruments

[p.318(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond

Bondo AW30

535
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Bondo dance

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Plate LXIV

Bondo girl playing the Jew's Harp

Photographs by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

[p. 318 (B)]

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X171

The relations between boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Muria. At marriages, the members of the two dormitories slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how the girls made holes in the wall near which they slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the *peking kurma* (girls' house). Three boys would go together and enter one at a time. After one boy had spent a little while inside, the second would come and pretend to catch him. 'What boy is in there? What are you doing?' He would then drive him out and take his place. This is not done in those dormitories where menstruating women sleep, for men cannot enter them, nor—presumably—where an old woman acts as chaperone.

There is no dormitory at the big Maria village of Gogonda. Hundreds of years ago, I was told, at the creation of the world, there was a dormitory in this village where girls and boys slept together, the girls in a line on one side of the house, the boys in a line on the other. One day when fishing they failed to make the proper offerings to the Yer Kanyang and she, being angry, suddenly caused the earth to open and swallow up both house and children. The parents heard a loud crying and ran to the spot, but could find nothing but water, and this pit always full of water can still be seen in Gogonda. At Muler they added the detail that the boys and girls went down into separate pits and came out into the valley a thousand feet below. Some time later the Gogonda people tried to revive the dormitory and built a house for the girls. But whenever they slept in it, it became filled with frogs and so had to be abandoned.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE DORMITORY

The origin of the village dormitory remains obscure. Possibly it is a survival of the communal house from which private dwellings split off[1]; the special quarters for unmarried men in the communal houses of Borneo seem to suggest this.[2] Hodson suggests three stages in the development of the home. At first there is the communal house where the whole village lives together. This develops into a group of individual houses with the sexes segregated—the unmarried boys and married men have their dormitory, the unmarried girls have theirs, the only people to live at home are the mothers and very young children. Finally, owing to the economic pressure of modern systems of taxation family life is extended to make the mother's house the abode also of the husband. 'This again has developed into the complete family house where the children of all ages and of both sexes live in the same house as their parents.'[3]

Shakespear suggested that the object of the dormitory was to prevent incest[4]; it is more likely, as we shall see, that it was instituted to save children from witnessing 'the primal scene' and from being an embarrassment to their parents. It fits in too with what seems to be a genuine psychological discovery of primitive peoples, that the less you see of people the better you get on with them. So, normally, a bride should be brought from another village; so, betrothed couples should have nothing to do with each other; so, if boys and girls are not shut up with their parents all the time, especially in the evenings

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[1] S. E. Peal, 'On the "Morung" as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JRAI*, Vol. XXII, p. 244. Cf. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 86.

[2] C. Hose and W. McDougall, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 51.

[3] Hodson, op. cit., p. 76.

[4] Shakespear, in a footnote to Hodson, op. cit., p. 86.

X883 when the father may be drunk and the mother tired and both ill-tempered, family life runs more smoothly and is more permanent.

X171 In some cases, particularly in Africa and Assam, the dormitory has undoubtedly a military purpose. Sometimes this end is sought by sexual abstinence and segregation from the girls; sometimes, the people appear to think that their warriors will fight better if they have no frustrations.

Roy summarized the aim of the Uraon dormitory as having been in its time 'an effective economic organization for purposes of food-quest, a useful seminary for training young men in their social and other duties, and an institution for magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to augment the procreative power of the young men'.[1]

I do not think we can ignore the magical aspect of the dormitory, though I doubt if this provides a reason for its foundation. For example, Shakespear reports of the Lushei Kuki clans that if a man kills a rhinoceros, his family will die unless he goes straight to the *zawlbuk* or to the forge and remains there for a day and a night.[2] The connexion of the dormitory and the magical forge is interesting. So also among the Chang, when a man kills a tiger, he must stay in the *morung* for thirty days.[3] When boys are initiated into the *darimu* of the Kiwai, they are shown a small image of a naked woman; this is expected to improve the supply of sago.[4] The chelik of the Muria ghotul have a special connexion with fertility rites.

Combined with these, there are entirely practical and straightforward reasons for the establishment of dormitories. Everywhere we find the need of a rest-house for visitors in a village and a special tradition of hospitality. In village life everywhere, it is useful and convenient to have the younger members of the tribe organized and available for work. Nor should we forget the apparently universal human tendency to form clubs. Where society is organized on an age-grade basis, this naturally leads to special clubs for the younger people and the unmarried. The aim of the Bondo, and possibly of some other tribal, dormitories in Orissa appears to have been to enable girls to find suitable husbands and to test their desirability.

No doubt all these causes have been, in their way and according to circumstances, operative in different parts of the world. The Bastar ghotul is peculiar in its elaborate organization of the sexual life of its members, in allowing close relations to live together in the same ghotul, and in having no military purpose.

III. The Muria's Own Theory

X883 182 The Muria themselves explain the origin of their ghotul in several different ways. First and most important they trace its beginning back into the mythological past of the Gond race.[5] Some also stress the desire to segregate the youth of the tribe and thus prevent them being an embarrassment to their parents; others emphasize the need of providing a sort of Boy Scout troop which will always be available to look after visitors to the village.

The last is the least likely reason. The Muria country has only been visited by officials in the last sixty years and by officials in any number during the

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[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.

[2] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, p. 103.

[3] Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 380.

[4] Beaver, op. cit., p. 184.

[5] The ghotul is possibly very old. A Jain text of the first or second century A.D., the *Brihat-Kalpasutra-bhashya* (Vol. IV, verse 3446), refers to the *Vijagharana-shala* of Tosali (or Bastar State) among the places to be avoided by Jain monks. This was a hut erected in the centre of the village where a fire was kept burning, and where a great number of lowly persons congregated to make selections for marriage.—Private communication from Mr V. S. Agrawala, Lucknow Museum.

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present century. The statement is one of those that are so often made with the idea that they will please the inquirer. 'We had to start the ghotul', said the headman of Binjhli, 'because we were ordered to maintain huts in which touring officers and subordinates could stay. It was a great problem how to look after these huts and how to serve the needs of the officers, who devoured more than a herd of buffaloes, whose ponies had to be fed with buckets of ghee, and at last we decided to put them in charge of the boys and girls.' It is true, of course, that though properly the ghotul and the Paik-gudi or Thana-gudi (official rest-hut) should be distinct, in practice most villages have no separate building for touring subordinates, and when these visit the village the chelik and motiari vacate their little club and turn it over to them. It is also true that the chelik have to see to the pitching of tents and to the supply of firewood for more exalted visitors. But the bulk of the work is done by the village Atpariha (drudge) and the Rawat (cowherd) from whose hands Hindu visitors are able to take water.

But this is an excuse, not a reason, for the existence of the ghotul. The same may be said of a suggestion made in Markabera that the ghotul was established to keep the tribe together, to maintain its culture and to protect its girls from the seduction of outsiders. The ghotul certainly achieves this end. It is an ideal instrument of the laws of endogamy. It is a powerful preservative of the old culture. But I doubt if the danger of intermarriage with outsiders has ever been acute.

In Markabera I also heard the interesting suggestion that the ghotul was founded 'to get the girls used to it'. We ourselves are so accustomed to the idea that a girl should be a virgin on her wedding-night, that it is hard for us to realize that many primitive people would very much prefer her not to be. Hence the *jus primae noctis*. Hence the ceremonial deflowering of girls by men other than their husbands. The ghotul might possibly—though I doubt if it could be the sole reason—have arisen from a desire that husbands should not have to face the magical infection of hymeneal blood.

We begin to approach the real reason for the ghotul in a statement by a very old Muria named Yogi who lived in Jaitpuri. The ghotul began, he said, 'because we didn't know what to do with these offspring of a vixen's vagina'—indicating everybody present. 'We were tired of settling their quarrels, and we didn't want their noise. So we said, "You all go off and play and spend your time together. You can do what you like provided you do the work we want from you, bring wood and water, tend the cattle, nurse the babies". At first we gave them a place on the verandah of someone's house, but there were too many of them and we got no peace, so at last we gave them a special house to live in away from the rest of us.'

The Lingo legend suggests that the ghotul serves the useful purpose of removing the younger brothers of a household from their dangerous proximity to the elder brothers' wives.

This is part of the truth but not the whole truth. I believe the fundamental reason for the ghotul is to prevent children watching what Freud called 'the primal scene' and to commit to the older boys and girls the task of educating the younger children, for which the parents have not the time or inclination.[1]

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[1] Among the Tanaina, when a boy reached the age of nine he went to live with his maternal uncle, for it was feared his father would be too indulgent and not force his child into the stern training for a life of bear-spearing and on the sea. The uncle would throw the child into cold water and harden him till he was grown and he returned to his parents. C. Osgood, 'Tanaina Culture', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXIII (New Series), p. 700.

X883 182 To understand this, we must consider in some detail the relation of Muria parents to their children.

IV. Avoiding the Primal Scene

X883 182 593 At about the time when children become capable of something more than games and food, they also become something of an embarrassment about the house. There is nowhere for them to sleep at night. They are always clamouring to go and play with the other children. They are apt to surprise the intimacies of marital life. The parents decide that it is time they went to the ghotul. At the age of six or seven, then, a child begins its dormitory life. In most ghotul there is a group of very small children, sent by their parents 'to get them out of the way'. They are not given ghotul names or any ghotul privileges, but the house serves as a sort of crèche, and after all most of the little children have older brothers or sisters there who can look after them.

One of the reasons often given by Muria to explain the existence of the ghotul is that 'it is sinful for parents to sleep in the presence of their children'. 'As soon as a child understands what it [that is, sexual intercourse] is, we send it to the ghotul.' Apparently the Muria parent does not consider the child capable of understanding the meaning of the 'primal scene' till it is about six or seven. But it is interesting and significant that the Muria should consider the point at all. It is indeed of such importance that I will quote all the statements that have been made to me about it. 'The very reason for the ghotul', said the headman of Jhakri, 'is that it is sinful to sleep before a daughter or a son. They must never see the parents sleeping on one mat, either by day or night. Suppose a little girl comes home late at night for some reason and finds her parents holding each other on the mat, they are very angry and abuse her saying, "Haven't you your ghotul to live in? Why do you want to come here?"'

In Malakot, the village Gaita told me that 'young children are only kept at home while they are too young to understand pleasure and pain. Very little children may sleep with their mothers, but then they must go somewhere else. They are always getting frightened, so we send them as soon as we can to the ghotul.'

Here is another opinion from one of the elders of Kongera. 'Suppose the child is two or three years old and suddenly wakes up to find its father copulating with the mother. The father goes on, he takes no notice, but the mother pats the child's chest saying, "I'll give you something to eat in a moment, but keep quiet now, my darling". The father also speaks sweet words to the child in order to deceive it about what is happening. But suppose it is a big child, of five or six years, then it is difficult. The father ceases his work and goes away. Next day they send it to the ghotul.'

And this from Binjhli: 'The ghotul was made simply to stop children watching their parents copulating. As soon as boys or girls understand what that is, we send them to the ghotul. It is a great shame to watch one's own parents at it. "What are they doing?" the little children say, wondering. "Why is my father throwing my mother about like that?" So we take them to the ghotul, and they ask no more questions. But what do the Hindu children do and the sahibs, where all live in one house and they have no ghotul?'

And finally from Alor: 'How difficult it is for parents to tell their bigger children, whom they have not yet sent to the ghotul, to go and sleep in another room. Some children are very good and understand, but others are stupid and insist on crowding into the parents' room. We daren't, even while

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they are asleep, pick them up and put them on the verandah. We feel very pleased when they begin to say, "This or that little girl has gone to the ghotul. I used to play with her, and now I feel lonely. Do let me go too". We send them to the ghotul very willingly.'

This desire to prevent the child from witnessing the 'primal scene' is interesting and important, though modern psycho-analysts are inclined to believe that Freud over-emphasized its dangers, and certainly any harm likely to be done to the child would have been done long before it reached the ghotul age. But it is at least significant that the parents are aware of the danger, that they think it not only embarrassing for themselves but harmful to the children, and that so many should trace the foundation of the ghotul to a cause which Freud would surely have applauded.[1]

But not only does the ghotul save the child from the psychological dangers of witnessing the 'primal scene'; it alters the entire parent-child complex by putting in the place of the father a new disciplinarian and in the place of the mother a new object of sensual attraction. 'When a boy or girl enters the ghotul', said a leading chelik at Masora, 'he usually forgets his relations altogether. They say they have no relations. The head of the ghotul is the father, and the Belosa is the mother.' However strict the father may be at home, however insistent on the fulfilment of domestic and economic duties, his authority is nothing before that of the dreaded Sirdar, who can fine you, truss your legs up to the roof, make you a mockery to your fellows. The father fades into the background; if he comes home drunk and beats up the family, the children will not be there; his orders and curses are feeble before those of the Sirdar. The father may still control a boy's work and duty, but his emotional life is dominated by the Sirdar. The result of this has been well put by J. P. Mills. Speaking of the policy of the American Baptist Mission in Assam which has, of course, been to discourage the dormitories which formerly flourished there as in Bastar, he writes,

> In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had considered the psychological aspect of the matter. A boy goes to the *morung* when he is very small—as soon, that is to say, as he 'feels shame' at sleeping in the same room as his parents. It is in the *morung* that he fags for other boys and is taught his duties in life and generally hammered into shape. This means that the *morung* tends to take the place of his father as a disciplinarian. This is most important, for it is from a son's feeling towards his father as disciplinarian that one of the great stresses of the family complex arises. Looking back over the thousands of Naga disputes that have been brought before me in the course of my service, it certainly seems to me that violent quarrels between fathers and sons are more frequent in tribes which have no *morungs*.[2]

Mills illustrates this by showing that in the Sema tribe where, as we have seen, there are no *morung*, such quarrels are disastrously common; Angami boys, who also do not grow up in dormitories, resent any form of discipline, x 813 yet among the Ao, where the *morung* plays an important part, quarrels between father and son are rare.

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[1] The same desire is said to be at the bottom of the custom recorded of the Savara of Orissa who, it is claimed, never have sexual congress after nightfall, but go out together during the day to special places in the jungle. The tribe has no dormitory, and the whole family has to sleep together in a single hut. See S. N. Roy, 'The Savaras of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. VII, p. 331. But I believe the taboo on intercourse at night to be an invention. I discuss it in my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 49f.

182 Muria parents are tolerant and understanding. 'Whenever we hear the
593 music of a drum', said a boy at Kabonga, 'we feel restless; we leave everything we are doing and go at once to dance and sing.' Here I was told a story, that is often repeated, of a boy who was sowing seed in his father's field. He had a whole measure of rice to sow, but when he heard drums beating in a neighbouring village he forgot all about it and went off to join the dance, leaving the pile of rice on the ground. Three days later he returned expecting to be beaten, but his father had understood the boy's feelings and had himself gone to the field and sown the rice instead. I have been told in various villages that for recognized festivals and marriages, parents are very sympathetic to their children.

[689] And indeed if the parents interfere with the life and discipline of the ghotul, if they stop their children going to it without sufficient excuse, they are fined—and so firmly established is the institution that they pay up.

There is very generally a convention that the parents know nothing of what happens in the ghotul. They are not even supposed to know their children's titles though, of course, they actually know everything that goes on. But the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. Should a girl meet her father as she is going to the ghotul, she should turn her head aside and walk away as quickly as possible. They should not greet or say anything to each other. But in some villages, in Kabonga for example, and at Jhakri, the older people have told me that when a girl gets engaged, her mother advises her to be very careful about allowing boys to take liberties with her. It is said, however, that the parents never warn a girl or boy against any particular person. At Jhakri, Raunu said that the mother says to the daughter at this time, 'Don't play and laugh too much with the boys; be happy, but don't let your hands and feet get into trouble. I never got into trouble nor did your grandmother; we were always known to be good girls for we never became pregnant. Never run away with a boy but marry the one we choose for you and don't quarrel with your girl friends.' So also a father advises his son to be very careful in his relations with girls who are already engaged to other boys. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial: 'Don't make a girl pregnant. We are poor people; I shall not be able to pay the fine; if you get into mischief you will have to go and work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way. Be happy but don't always run after the same girl.'

It will be seen that this kind of advice is very practical, and for that reason the boys and girls do not resent it. The parents are not concerned with the 'morals' of their children and, indeed, even when a boy makes a girl pregnant the parents generally stand by him and help him. When I asked a chelik at Markabera whether his parents ever got angry with him for sexual indulgence in the ghotul, he replied, 'Why should they, didn't they do the same when they were young?'

It is not easy to obtain information about the mother-son relationship. I have not heard of any 'possessive' mothers and the general circumstances of Muria life are such as to eliminate the dangers of the mother-fixation. Naturally, mothers tend to spoil their sons and fathers their daughters. 'A boy may be frightened of his father but he is never afraid of his mother. If he does not work properly his father chases him with a stick and he hides until he knows the danger is past and then his mother receives him lovingly and gives him special food.'

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It is said that a mother often accuses the father of jealousy, saying, 'You cannot bear seeing that boy's happiness when he goes to the ghotul dance; can't you remember that you were a young boy yourself once and you too went to the ghotul?'

Widows' sons and only sons are often spoilt and indulged—'*Rānd ke beta sānd*, a widow's son is a bull': he does what he likes and no one can control him. So too it is said of an only son that 'he brings home all the quarrels of the world: if he is given a pot to urinate in, he does it on the floor'.

On the whole the relation of children and parents is a happy one. This may be at least one reason why there is so little conflict and jealousy, so little strain, among the Muria.

In many respects, Muria practice corresponds to what Seligman once described as the psycho-analytic ideal of education. Melanie Klein, speaking of children rather younger than many of those in the ghotul, describes the upbringing of the future generation. 'We shall be more sparing of compulsory ethical requirements in regard to the tiny developing creature than people were with us. We shall allow him to remain for a longer period uninhibited and natural, less interfered with than has hitherto been the case, to become conscious of his different instinctive impulses and of his pleasure therein, without immediately whipping up his cultural tendencies against this ingenuousness. We shall aim at a slower development that allows room for his instincts to become partially conscious, and together with this for their possible sublimation. At the same time, we shall not refuse expression to his awakening sexual curiosity and shall satisfy it step by step, even—in my opinion—withholding nothing. We shall know how to give him sufficient affection, and yet avoid a harmful superfluity: above all, we shall reject physical punishment and threats, and secure obedience necessary for upbringing by means of withdrawing affection.'[1]

Of this passage Seligman says that 'my experience suggests that further investigation will show a very small number of psychotics among the less advanced of the primitive races, and here it is interesting to note that in the upbringing of their children these races do, to a considerable extent, conform to the psycho-analytic ideal' set out above. He adds that 'there is, however, one desideratum laid down by the author, which I believe is only occasionally fulfilled, "that the child from birth shall not share the parental bedroom"'.[2]

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[1] Melanie Klein, 'The Development of a Child', *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, Vol. IV (1923), p. 445.

[2] C. G. Seligman, 'Anthropological Perspective and Psychological Theory', *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 221. A terrible picture of the effect on a boy's mind and character caused by witnessing scenes in his parents' bedroom is given by Graham Greene in his novel *Brighton Rock*.

CHAPTER TEN

THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

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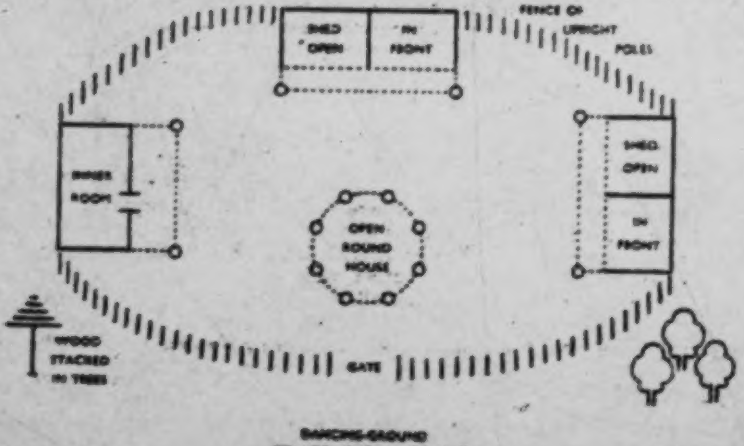
THE position and architecture of the ghotul is largely determined by one simple fact. In every village in Bastar, as we have seen, the people have to build and maintain a hut for the use of travellers and touring officials. This is an excellent arrangement: it prevents the invasion of aboriginal homes by outsiders, and it means that in every village there is some clean and roomy place where disputes can be settled and official business transacted. This Paik-ghotul or Thana-gudi, as it is called, is supposed to be separate from the Koitur-ghotul or Ghotul-gudi, the club of the boys and girls, and in some Muria villages it is. But in many others the elders of the village seem to have decided that it would save them a great deal of trouble if they combined the Paik-ghotul and the Koitur-ghotul in one compound. It would take up less room, means less building, and the young men would be always there to do the work. I have already quoted some Muria elders as saying that this was actually how the ghotul originated. If the young men were kept together in one place they would always be ready to serve visitors and could hand over their house to them for the night. This situation is of course comparatively modern. Old Muria like Yogi and Bindo remember the day when there was no revenue staff and they never saw a touring officer.



The Markabera Ghotul
(*See p.* 327)

x 883
342

The original ghotul, then, was probably a small building on the outskirts of the village, among trees, perhaps originally in some sacred grove, aloof from the public eye, with a small secret door. You may still see this kind of ghotul in predominantly Hindu villages and in parts of Kondagaon, at Kealnar and Sonawal, for example, in the south, and Kerawahi, Majhiboran, Lihagaon in the north. But there is no rule. Near the eastern boundary, there was a small ghotul at Beghbera, and a combined Thana-gudi and Koitur-ghotul at the neighbouring Ulera. Where a village consists, administratively,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond

Gadaba AW31

Plate LXV

142
301
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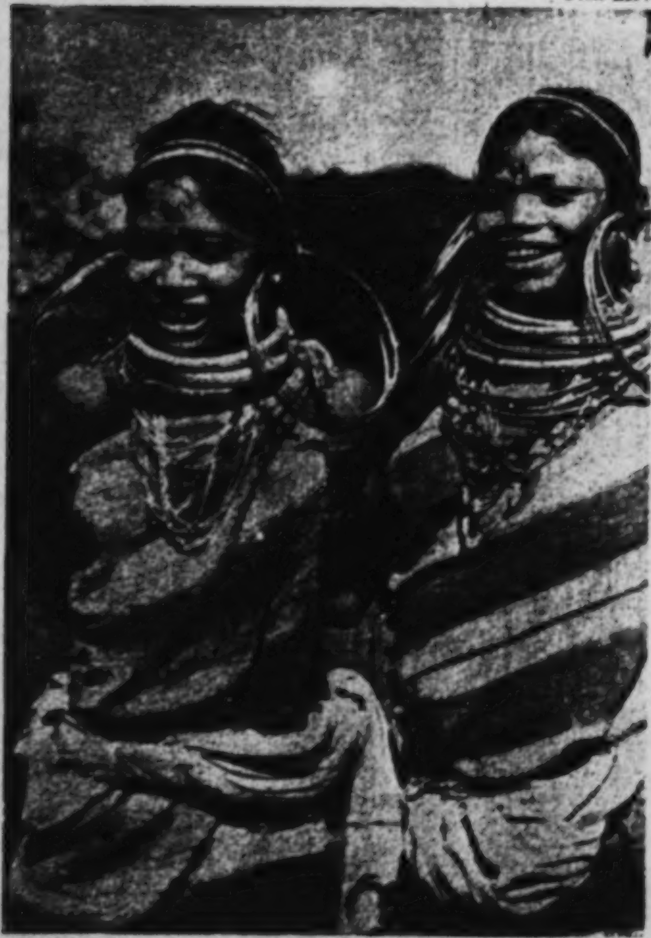


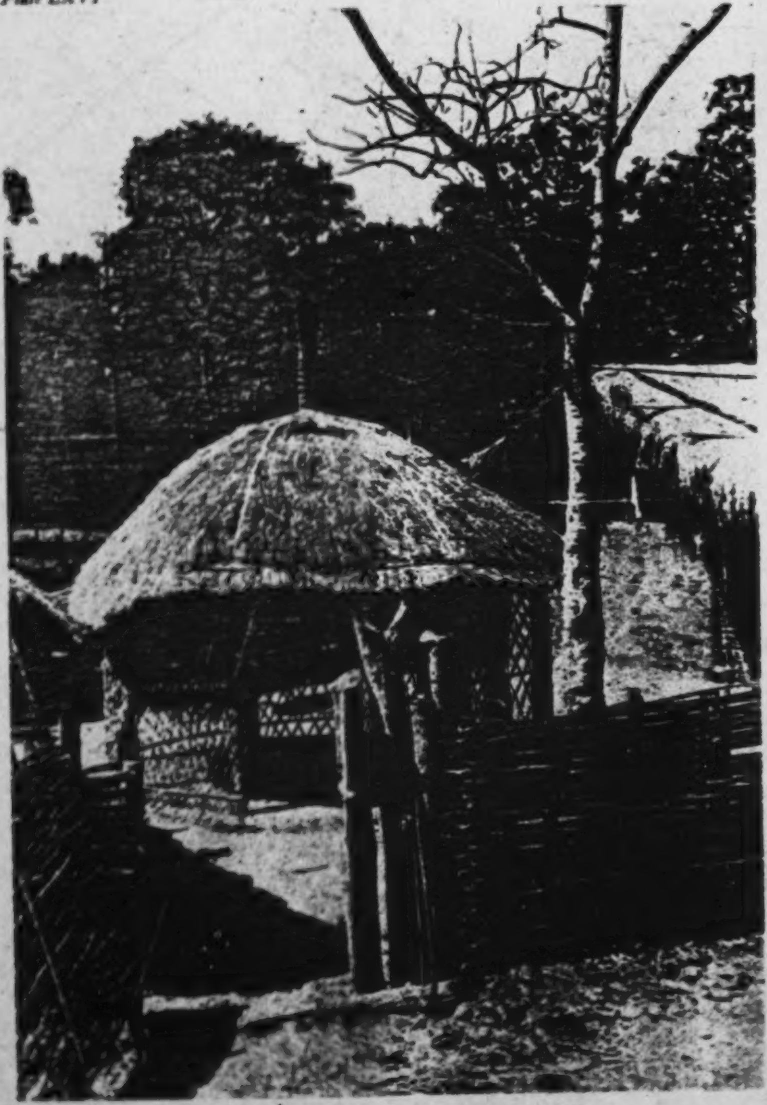
Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Gadaba girls during a dance

[p. 326 (A)]

Plate LXVI

X
893
342



The Palli ghotul

[p. 326 (B)]

883^{x}
342

of several hamlets, there will probably be a large ghotul in the main village (where officials usually halt) and small ones in the hamlets.

883^{x}
361
342

In all such villages there is a separate building in the middle of the village for officials. In Masora, for example, there was a large Thana-gudi inside the village, and away on the outskirts, among trees, is a small hut with a fenced compound in front. This is the home of the chelik and motiari. In Baniagaon, a predominantly Hindu village with a school, the ghotul is similarly separated from the officials' halting-place, and is a single building with a small door facing away from the village towards the forest. In Kachora, near by, you may see the same type of ghotul, even further removed from the ordinary dwelling-places of the village, beyond the shrine of the Village Mother, perhaps because an aggressive Brahmin lives there and tries to dominate the Muria. I obviously cannot give a list of all such villages, though there are not very many of them. In the Chalka Pargana, I think of Kajen, Naria and Maranar as places where the Thana-gudi was separate from the ghotul. In such villages there is sometimes not even a fence to isolate the compound; that is not necessary, forest and field keep the children separate from the world. But in all there is a small secret door, a hatch which you have to bend down to and climb over—not unlike the door by which Alice entered Wonderland.

883^{x}
342

But, as I have said, in the majority of Muria villages the Thana-gudi is combined with the Koitur-ghotul, and this influences both its plan and its location. Officials will not want to camp outside the village in the jungle; they will need a hut for their horses, and accommodation for servants. And so we get the large ghotul with its spacious compound, standing in the very heart of the village, which is familiar to every touring officer in the north of Bastar. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and was never contemplated by the Administration. Into the very heart of Muria life is injected the all-too-often poisonous contact of every casual wanderer. There is a type of touring subordinate who makes a point of halting in ghotul where it is known that there are pretty motiari and pesters the chelik to pimp for them—which to their honour, be it said, they never do. Contractors for myrabolams or tendu leaves camp for days in the ghotul, making it impossible for the boys and girls to live their normal lives. I once found an opium-seller permanently established in a ghotul with his wife, thus outraging the fundamental Muria rule that the presence of a married woman there is an offence to Lingo Pen. He was removed at once by the Administrator, but Bastar is a big place and it is impossible to say in how many other places the integrity of the ghotul is thus destroyed. This is, of course, the Muria's own fault. It is due to the slackness and selfishness of the older men who want the youngsters to do all the work. It is thus difficult to do anything about it.

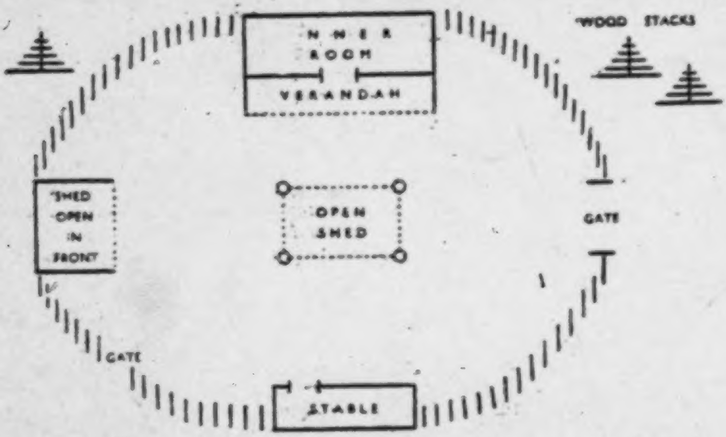
Let us examine some of the villages which have ghotul of this type. Often, so long as there are no visitors, the enlarged ghotul is all to the advantage of the boys and girls. In Markabera, for example, chelik and motiari have in all five different sleeping-places and a spacious compound. The house with the very deep verandah is, of course, the original ghotul and the other buildings have developed from it to meet the pressure of outside visitations. But the extra room thus provided and the open sheds available as dormitories are a boon to the children's health. The one-room ghotul with its tiny door and no windows and its crowded floor, its stuffy smoky atmosphere, cannot be good for anyone.

Fortunately—from this point of view—the larger type of ghotul is far the most common. This model with its central house with deep verandah, spacious inner room, large door, open hut for conference or sleep in the hot

Maria

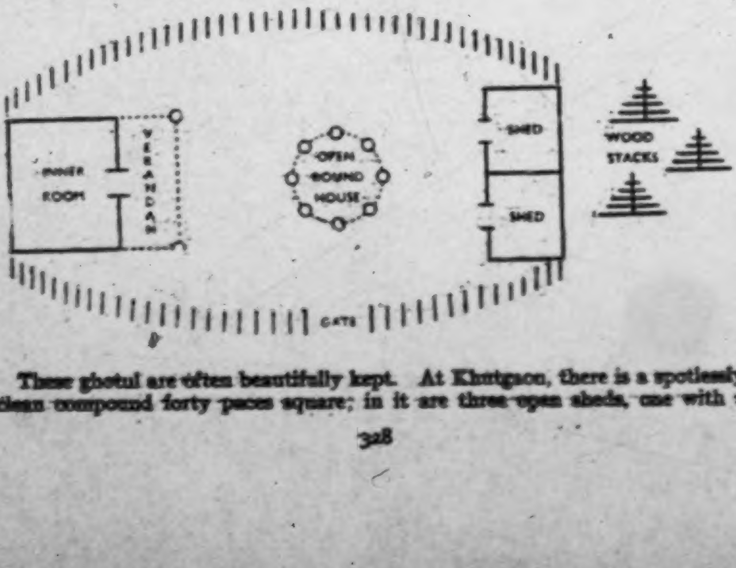
X 883
342

weather, and several small sheds, the whole surrounded by a fence, may be seen in scores of Muria villages. There is the same arrangement at Bandopal, at Ulera, at Amgaon, at Jhakri, at Almer, at More Berma. This is the plan of the ghotul at Almer in the Bara Dongar Pargana:



This ghotul stands in the middle of the village, in a grove of tamarind trees.

In a third type of ghotul, its position in the middle of the village is possibly due to Maria influence. The traditional Maria ghotul is the centre of the male life of the village. The men assemble there in the evenings, and talk, smoke, drink and sleep. But girls do not normally attend. In villages like Palli Barkot, Watia, Phulpar, Koilibera, on the fringe of the Abujhmar Maria country, the ghotul is in the heart of the village; it is generally (except at Koilibera) not so spacious as those we have been considering. The plan below of the ghotul at Palli Barkot is typical.

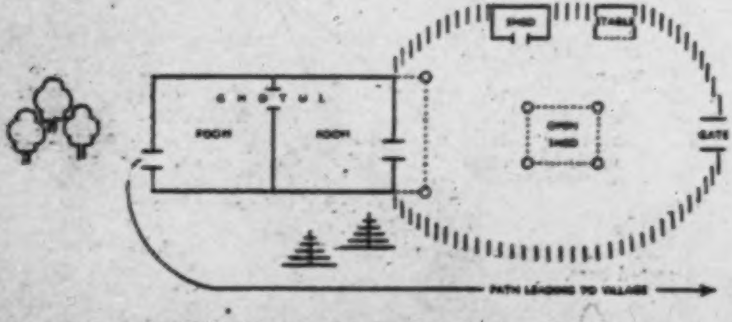


These ghotul are often beautifully kept. At Khutgaon, there is a spotlessly clean compound forty paces square; in it are three open sheds, one with a finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence. 883x 342

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and cosiness. My memories of Pupgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lonelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—



One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari bring grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just 883x 342 787

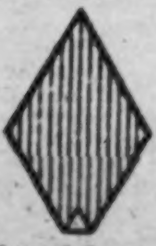
X 883 342 [787] as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the *four* corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

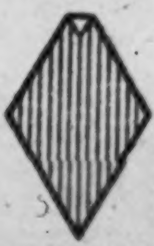
At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

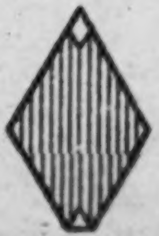
Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

X 883 342 353 531 831 As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.







Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

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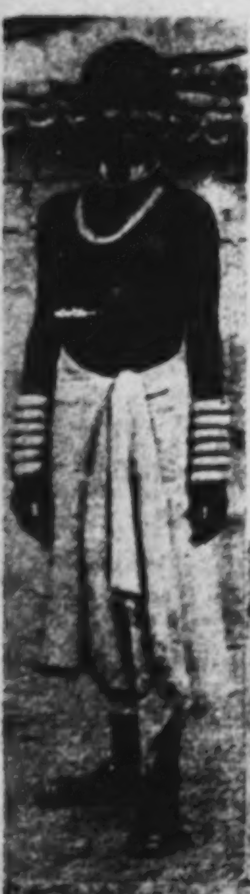
[171] [1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of animal excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

Oraon AW39



Uraon dhangri

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142
291
301

Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

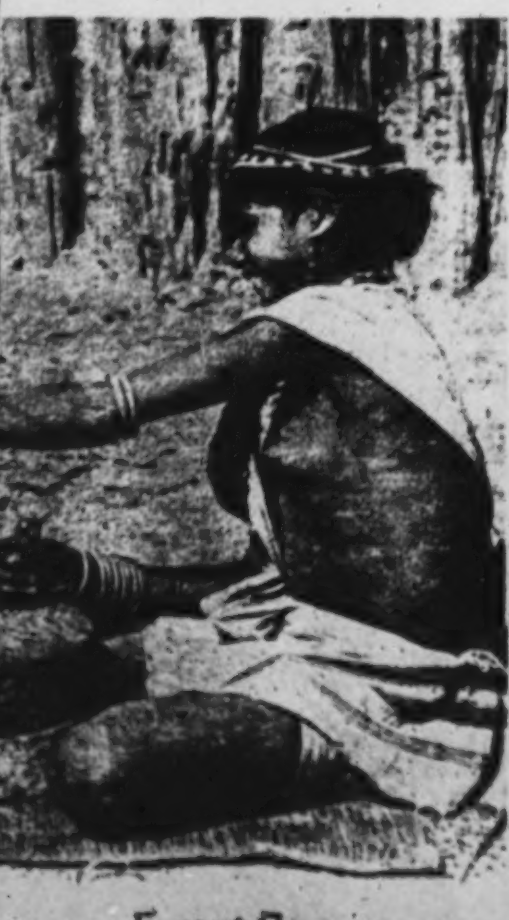

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Plate LXVIII

x883
342
417

The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings
in the More Berma ghotul

x883
353
532

[p. 330 (B)]

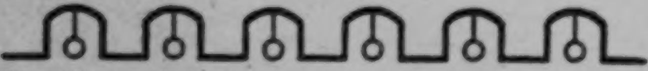
883x
342
353
531
831

on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

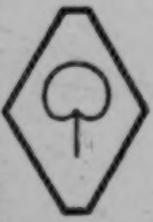
The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at More Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kmutpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



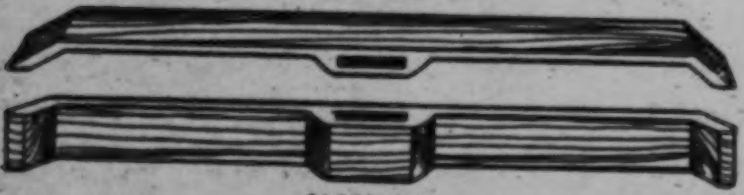
But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

883x
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *hutal* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *hutal* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property



TOP VIEW



BACK VIEW

FIG. 34. *Hutal* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments
Length 2' 7"

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[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 48. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

X 883
352

of the ghotul, though they are usually appropriated by particular boys for the period of their membership.

[531]

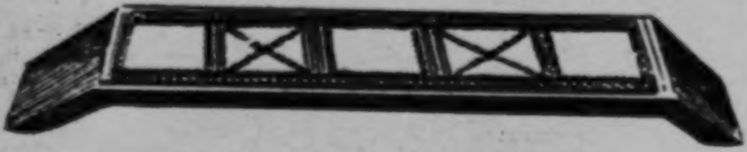

Fig. 55. Carved head-rest from Markabera
Length 5′ 6″

In eastern Kondagaon drums are usually kept in the ghotul; at Masora a dhol-drum hangs under the verandah roof—it is the local habitation of Lingo

[531]

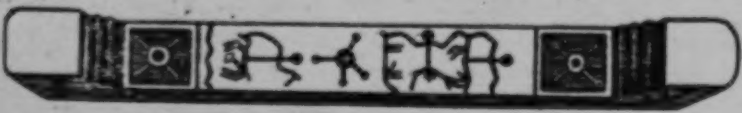

Fig. 56. Carved underside of wooden head-rest from Kumli
Length 4′

Pen. At Dongrigura and other villages in this area, the whole ceiling is of drums, a fine and impressive sight. Special officers are appointed to provide rope for hanging them up and to see that they are kept in good order.

Flutes are often pushed into the thatch, but dancing-sticks are kept in the shrine of the Village Mother. I have never seen the emblem of a god, a flag or a 'horse' in the ghotul, nor any village symbol, but in Palli Barkot there was a bundle of blessed seed hanging from the roof.

There are often little holes in the wall for keeping tobacco and other small treasures. Sometimes too there are holes in the floor—for husking the rice that is brought home from the Pus Kolang and other expeditions. In one or two ghotul I have seen holes low down in the wall to serve as urinals. Outside in the courtyard there may be a large flat stone for washing clothes, but this is probably an innovation for the benefit of outsiders.

X 883
351

Inside the ghotul compound there is generally a stack of grass for thatching the roofs. Outside are tall piles of firewood, which may be stacked criss-cross about a central pole or piled up in the forked branches of a tree. Sometimes long poles are stood upright against and round a tree. In Jhakri I saw near the ghotul four different ways of storing the chelik's wood—it was stacked horizontally criss-cross round a tree; it was laid in parallel rows between two trees; it was criss-crossed between two upright poles tied together at the top by a rope; and it was stacked upright against a tree.

These stores of wood play an important part in the consciousness of every Muria boy, for his earliest ghotul memories are of his duty to add one or two pieces to them every evening, failure to do so earning dreaded punishments.

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pull themselves up by their arms, to kiss them. 'I remember straining up, and at last reaching the yellow pitch pine and the two crimson lips. They looked indecent, for some reason; as if they were the drawing of another part of the body.' If the boys were not quick or could not reach the lips, they were flicked with wet towels as an encouragement.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari. 883x 836 178

[353 531]

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidār*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidār* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karagaon, which was formerly

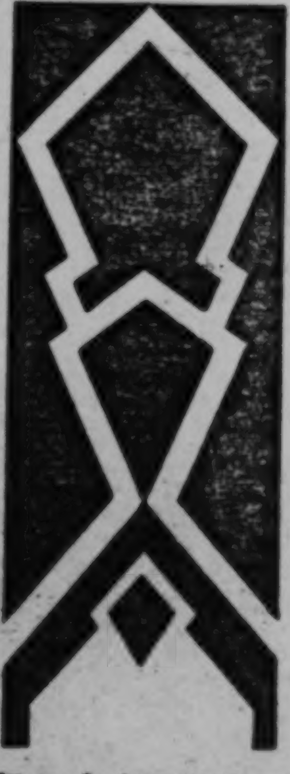

Fig. 57. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

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[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 24ff.

X 883 836 178 [842] a *jodidār* ghotul, a pregnancy scandal caused the chelik and motiari to adopt the other rule of partnership. Twenty years ago, Masora was a *jodidār* ghotul; today its members insist on change. I believe that originally all over the ghotul area the dormitories were of the older type; then in order to avoid the scandals and elopements that naturally arose from such intense and lasting attachments, and as a result of the belief that conception was less likely when the cycle of coitus was frequently broken, the rules were changed.

The ghotul, therefore, gives no support to those who believe in what Westermarck called the 'hypothesis of primitive promiscuity'. Promiscuity is the last thing permitted in the *jodidār* ghotul. It might even be argued that it is the result of culture-contact, for the ghotul in the neighbourhood of towns and schools, or along the roads, are generally of the modern, promiscuous, type.

This gradual change from one tradition to another probably accounts for the very haphazard distribution of the two types at the present time. The old tradition persists in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar and among the Jhoria; elsewhere there is no rule. Here and there throughout the whole area, *jodidār* ghotul survive in the midst of dormitories which, as the result of scandal or example, have changed their rules. In the Kongur Pargana, for example, More Berma, Kanhargaon and Gorma are ghotul of the old type surrounded by others, as are Chimri and Morenga in the Bangoli Pargana. At the present time, the newer type of ghotul seems to be in the majority; out of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in *jodidār* dormitories, and 1280 in the others, while out of 347 dormitories of which I have informati[illegible] on this point 269 have adopted the new rules, 78 retaining the older customs.

II

X 883 836 In the *jodidār* ghotul, the pairing-off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most villages there is a custom of the ghotul marriage, which is celebrated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and received their titles. In Metawand the chelik gave me a detailed description of the ceremony.

The members of the ghotul are allotted their various parts in the marriage. First of all, the boy's 'parents' go to the girl's 'parents' for the betrothal ceremony, carrying two leaf-pipes to represent bottles of liquor. The girl's parents say—in strict accordance with tradition—'Why have you come, samdhi?' 'O there's nothing special, we were going this way and looked in for a few moments.' 'No, no, there must be some reason.' 'Well, we did hear that a flower had blossomed in your house; we would pick it to adorn our hair.' 'Ah, how truly they say that a dog is fed many years only to be taken by a panther in the end, and a daughter is cherished only to be carried off by the samdhi.' There follows the usual dispute about the bride-price and, when that is agreed, the two parties sit together and smoke.

The following day comes the 'marriage'. Ashes are used instead of haldi. A little booth is made in the ghotul court. The marriage ritual is briefly recapitulated. Water is poured from the roof over the two children. Eager hands catch them and shut them up in an inner room. The bride screams, 'Open the door, let me out'. The others, shouting with laughter, at last let them go. That night the two sleep together, and will probably continue to do so until one of them is married.

But 'divorce' is allowed. I was given a vivid account by a chelik of the Kapsi ghotul of how this is arranged. If a motiari has intercourse with another boy, her own chelik reports the matter to the Sirdar saying, 'My wife has left her house and made another; for many days she lived and fed with me, but now she has run away and my honour is ruined. How can I live in a broken house, how can my work prosper in a field of weeds?'

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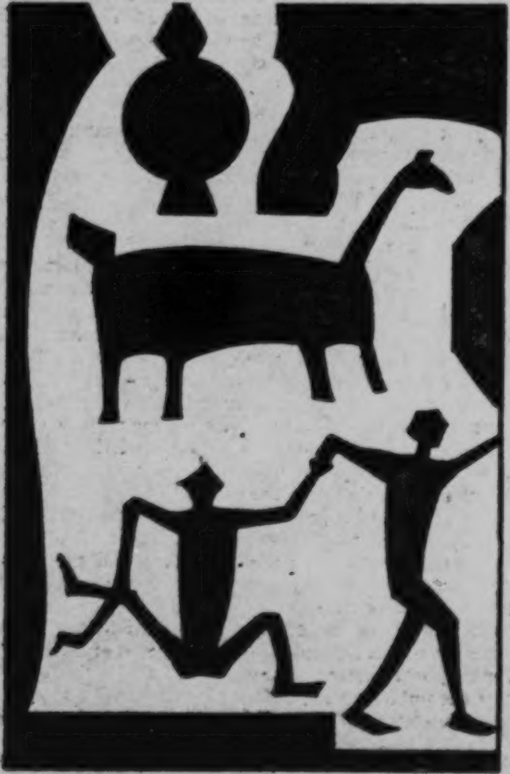

[531]

FIG. 58. Ghotul carvings at Nayanar
Slightly enlarged

Then the Sirdar calls the girl and says, 'Well, girl, why have you left your husband? Do you really want to forsake him and live with this other boy?' If the girl has made up her mind, she may answer, 'Yes, I want to live with this boy. My honour has gone to him'. The Sirdar then says to the second boy, 'How can you live with another chelik's wife? Think well, are you going to keep her, or will you send her away again?' The boy replies, 'I didn't fetch the girl; she came to my mat of her own accord. Now how can I quarrel with her or drive her away? Her husband must have neglected her or beaten her'.

x 883
836

At this the Sirdar turns to the first boy and says, 'Yes, tell us, you must have abused her and driven her away by your unkindness'. But he replies, 'I never abused her for rice or for work or for lying together. She left by her own desire, straying like a cow. I want her no more. But I must have her price'.

This leads to a long haggle about the compensation to be paid and at last a hundred rupees is settled, and another chelik stands bail. After a few days the second boy brings a hundred siari seeds, and five leaf-pipes representing five bottles of liquor for the panchayat. The money is paid, the pipes are smoked, some ashes are sprinkled over the newly-assorted pair, and the readjustment is complete.

After a few days the deserted boy goes to the Sirdar and says, 'Have you any widows in your pargana, master?' The Sirdar says, 'Well, perhaps—in such and such a village there is a widow, or she may be a virgin, I really forget'. Once again parents are appointed, there is a betrothal and a new marriage. In Kapsi they said that the Tussaro had the task of seeing that the bridegroom fulfilled his duties to his new wife.

I have recorded a curious custom in several ghotul of this type. At Chimri, when the young chelik first gets his 'wife' he has to pay a sort of rent or tribute for her to the ghotul. She is a 'new field' and he must give five score pieces of green wood every year for it. Later, when his girl passes her menarche, the boys say that 'the field is well ploughed and manured'; its value has increased and he must pay ten score. Still later, when the land is fully developed, he must give twenty score. At Mundpal, the rule was that for a young girl, described as a *banghar* field unbroken by the plough, the boy had to give ten score siari seeds. When the girl became mature, she was described as the fruitful ploughed land known as *gabhar*, and the boy had to pay the ghotul fifteen score. Three years after the menarche, a girl was known as a *munda* or embanked field, and now the chelik had to pay twenty score.

And further, if a girl had a great many ornaments, she was described as a rich woman with a large herd of cows and goats, and the chelik had to pay a super-tax of ten score seeds for her. At Rengagondi the boys counted the number of reeds in a girl's sleeping-mat and estimated her importance and the tax to be paid on her accordingly.

Like the 'police work' of the ghotul, this taxation is a sort of game; yet it is taken perfectly seriously, and it impresses on everyone the 'right' that a chelik has over his ghotul-mate. Many a feast has been enjoyed by the ghotul company out of the public taxes.

Another example of the importance of the 'ghotul marriage' is to be found in the entirely serious creation of a whole set of 'ghotul relatives'. In ordinary life, the Muria (like most of the rest of India) regard certain people as standing in a relationship of taboo. Such are a boy's wife's elder sister (*akoin*), his younger brother's wife (*korydr*), and his father's younger brother's wife (*kuchi*). He must not sit alone in the same room with any of these; he must not touch their heads; in his presence they must not 'lift their legs'—that is, they should not sit or climb over a fence before him and must not walk in front of him.

These rules are observed, at least officially, in the ghotul. Thus a young chelik must not have anything to do with the elder sister of the motiari who is his special partner; an older boy must not sit on his younger brother's sleeping-mat for fear he may be led into an improper familiarity with his '*korydr*'. In Metawand and Markabera there was even a rule that two brothers should not sleep in the same room of the ghotul, for it is essential that the younger brother's 'wife' should avoid the elder brother. She must not be found alone in the ghotul with him. A Muria girl never covers her head,[1] but at least she must not undo her hair in his presence. When the elder brother is away from the ghotul his 'wife' is allowed to sleep with her '*dewar*', the younger brother. 883x 836

A chelik does not seem to have to avoid entirely his brother's daughters; in the ghotul he may abuse them or flirt with them, but he ought not to sleep with one of them. But they can massage him, as indeed his own sisters can. They call him *salwa* in the ghotul. This leads us to the interesting provision that close relations should not address each other by their ghotul titles, but by terms of relationship, thus continually reminding themselves and one another how they are related and that they must behave.

What is the reason for these rules of avoidance? The ban on the younger brother's wife is probably to safeguard the position of the younger brother, always in jeopardy as a hundred folk-tales show. In the ghotul certainly it serves as a valuable protection to a younger boy, whose brother might well be the all-powerful Sirdar or Diwan. Similarly, the rule of avoidance between a boy and his motiari's elder sister, who might be the almost equally powerful Belosa or head of the girls, prevents her from taking advantage of her position to seduce a boy away from his 'lawful wife'.

[531]

There does not appear to be any taboo on brothers and sisters witnessing each other's erotic adventures in the ghotul, provided they do not discuss them with each other and, of course, strictly avoid any relations between themselves. It is not, however, considered improper for a brother to have full knowledge of and to hear all about his sister's love affairs. Once in Binjhli a boy told me in Gondi how he had dreamt that he was having intercourse with a certain girl. The girl's own brother interpreted for me without embarrassment.

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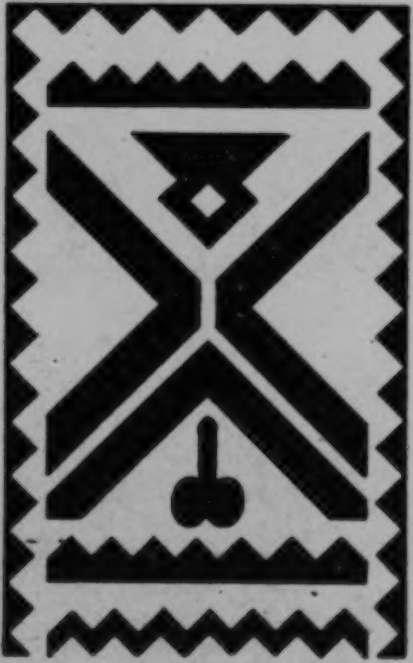

FIG. 59. Wall-decoration from the Remawand ghotul
Height 6'

A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed and both behave naturally.

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[1] What Hoffmann said so charmingly of the Munda is true also of the Muria girl: 'Nothing but a load or a flower is ever seen on the head of a Munda woman.'

x883 In many ghotul a sister may comb and massage a brother, but in Kabonga
836 there was a rule that she must not salute him with Johar nor comb his hair.

593 Many coarse jokes are made about the relation of brothers and sisters when everyone is drunk at a marriage. There are many obscene songs about
[522] it, for it is regarded as a licensed subject for humour. As in other societies, however, it is probable that such humour only exists against a background of very strict propriety. The suggestion that a brother is sleeping with his sister is amusing simply because he never does.

Generally it is said that brothers and sisters live together very happily. When they do quarrel a boy may say to his sister: 'You *poisa* (big-bellied one), you *chipri* (you've got dirty eyes), *saladri* (murderess).' It is said that a girl on her marriage remembers these delightful animosities and weeps bitterly saying, 'No one will be able to quarrel with me so sweetly in future'. The brother may threaten to turn his sister out of the house, but she has the ready retort available that 'in any case I am not going to stay in your house, I can easily make a living somewhere else'.

III

x883 How far is the rule of fidelity to a single partner kept? This is a matter on which there can be no possible statistical evidence; one can only give a
836 general impression and quote a few examples. The temptation to break the rules must be very great. Ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion. The boys and girls live in the closest contact, and enjoy sexual intimacy in one another's presence. Certain relatives, such as the younger brother, have traditional privileges. The chelik are often absent in the fields, and their motiari sleep accessible and alone. In every 'memoir' that I have collected, the narrator has described how he or she evaded the ghotul rules.

From these memoirs I will give a few quotations. My first is from the experiences of Budhu, a Poyami of Kanera in the Sonawal Pargana of Kondagaon, in a *jodidar* ghotul forty years ago.

> In those days there were about twelve boys and ten girls in the ghotul, and a boy used to sleep with his partner until his marriage unless he changed his name. I was married to the Malko and loved her very much. I was then Sepahi. But after two years, I was made Kotwar, and I had to leave Malko and sleep with the Kotwarin, for that was the rule. Yet my thoughts were always for Malko, and at night when everyone was asleep I would leave the mat where I was sleeping with Kotwarin and creep over to Malko to make love to her.
>
> My parents knew nothing of this, yet to my delight they told me one day that they were going to arrange my marriage with Malko, which was just what we wanted.
>
> A few days after this good news, I went to Sonawal for work and stayed there for a week. During this time I slept in the Sonawal ghotul with the Jamadarin. On the last night this girl took the comb from my hair as a keepsake. From Sonawal I went to Kokori and danced in the ghotul there. One of the motiari fell in love with me and constantly offered me tobacco. After a few days I started home, but three of the girls met me in the jungle and begged me to stay with them, but I had to go home.
>
> Soon afterwards I was married to Malko and we were very happy. We have always done everything together and have never quarrelled.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Phirtu, the Chowkidar of the Masora ghotul

Plate LXIX

The ghotul near Malakot

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[p.338(N)]

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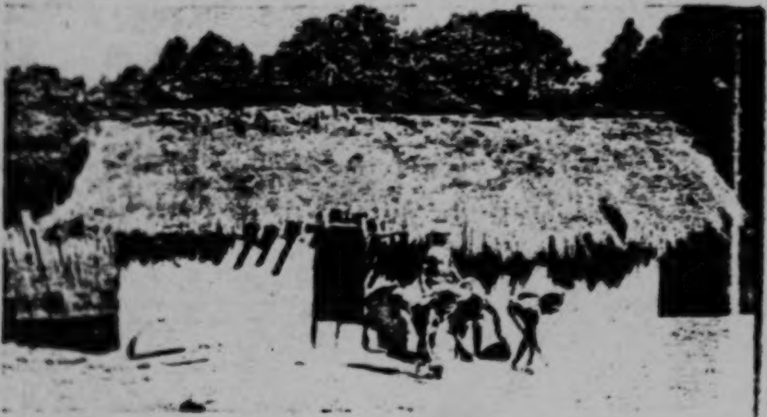
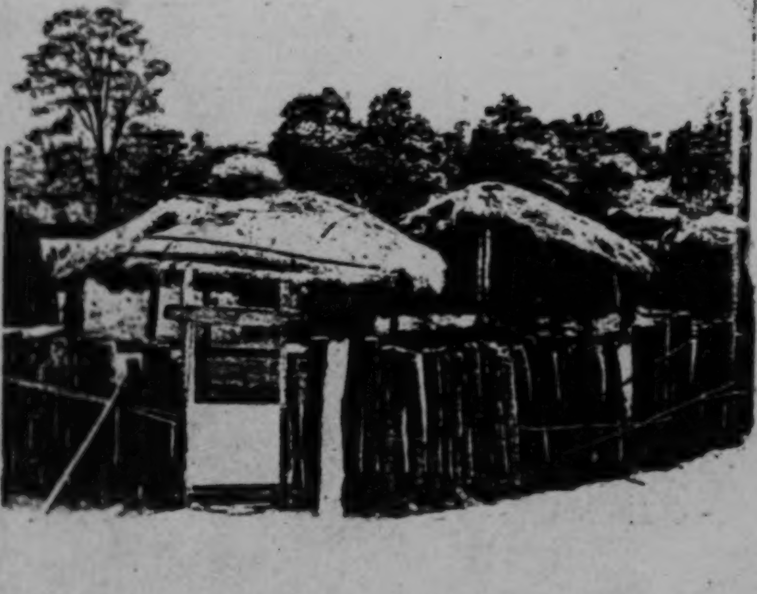
342

Plate LXX



The Baghbera

The Bandopal ghotul



[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

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[837]

> A year after my marriage, the Maharaja came to Bara Dongar and I went with my father to see him enthroned. Afterwards we went to Malakot, and I slept in the ghotul for two nights. While all were asleep one of the girls came secretly to me.

Here we have a picture of a situation where a boy who is a member of a *jodidār* ghotul and thus supposed to be faithful to his official partner, yet continues his romantic attachment to the girl he really loves and whom he ultimately marries. Budhu was also able to evade the rules by visiting ghotul of the other type. Had the Sonawal and Kokori ghotul also been of the *jodidār* pattern, they could not have extended to him such privileges.

It will be noted that these temporary encounters with other girls did not in any way interfere with the boy's devotion to his Malko and the happiness of his married life with her. He says, and I have no doubt that it is true, that he has never had an affair with a married woman, or indeed with any other woman after the early incident in the Malakot ghotul. 'After a year my wife stopped me going to the ghotul.'

Here is another significant record of life in a *jodidār* ghotul at the time of the Bastar rebellion (1911). The narrator is Gadru, a Muria of the Kunjami clan from Chaniyagaon.

> After I had been in the ghotul a year I was given the name of Silledar at the time of the Chait Dandar, and six months later I was paired off with the Jhalaro and began to sleep with her. The Mukhiya warned us both not to have too frequent intercourse and to take every care that there was no scandal [i.e. pregnancy]. I slept with the Jhalaro daily, but I only went to her twice a week or even less. The girl who really loved me in the ghotul was the Alosa, my mother's brother's daughter. Her partner was the Jhoria and she had to sleep with him every night. But when he was asleep, she often used to crawl over to my mat and I would turn my back on the Jhalaro and make love to her.

An old woman of about seventy years of age, Koili of Berma village, gave some interesting reminiscences of her ghotul life.

> For six months after I joined the ghotul, until I got a title, I slept with the little boys. When I was made Nirosa I was too poor to give the usual feast of parched rice and liquor, but the chelik collected money for me and got a rupee's worth of liquor so I was not shamed. That night everyone was very drunk, and the Kotwar who slept with me had intercourse with me for the first time. The next day the Kotwar ordered that henceforth I was to sleep every day with the Sirdar. The Sirdar was related to me, though distantly, as a parental uncle, and I did not like it at all, but I had to do what the Kotwar said. We were both very shy and never spoke to one another and slept back to back with faces turned away. It was a long time before we had intercourse, but when there was a marriage in the village, everyone got drunk and excited and that night we went to each other. After that our shyness disappeared, and we used to have congress every night.
>
> Soon afterwards my betrothal ceremony took place. Among those who came for it was the Kapatdar of the Veleknar ghotul. The Sirdar had gone away somewhere, and that night the Kapatdar slept with me. When the others knew of it, they laughed at us and teased us; I was so embarrassed that for a whole week I stayed away from the ghotul.
>
> When I was married, the motiari brought me to the ghotul compound

X 883
836

and gave me liquor to drink. I made Johar to all the chelik and motiari and never entered the ghotul again.

Three years after marriage I gave birth to a male child, but with great difficulty, for the Sirdar who loved me very much after all the years we were together in the ghotul and who had wanted me to run away with him, was angry at my marrying someone else and sent magic to trouble me. When I recovered, the Sirdar made my husband ill instead, but the Siraha cured him.

Another old woman over sixty years old, Kachari of Kanhargaon, remembers the ghotul of that village while it was still *jodidar*; a few years later the rules were changed on account of a scandal.

> My ghotul husband was the Likhen; I was the Chaiko. But the boy I really loved was the Salya. One day while I was going to the ghotul, I met the Salya and went with him to a field. The Sirisdar and Beldar saw us and reported the matter to the Kotwar. That night the chelik refused to let me enter the ghotul, and the Kotwar and some others questioned me outside the door, accusing me of having had intercourse with the Salya in the field.
>
> The Diwan said that as a punishment every chelik would have me that night, but just then a constable came to the Paik-gudi and the Diwan had to go and fetch him wood, so I escaped. But the Kotwar tried to have intercourse with me during the night. I resisted him, and in the morning he was very angry and told the Diwan what had happened. The next evening five of the chelik had me one after another, and in spite of all my cries and struggles I could not get free. The other motiari watched, but did nothing to help me.[1]
>
> When I was sixteen years old I was betrothed to a chelik at Bara Dongar, but I eloped with the Salya. We were about to get married at Bandopal, when a search party caught us, and I was taken home and immediately married to my betrothed. Later I left him for a very handsome chelik from my old ghotul whom I met in the bazaar. Four years later I went mad as a result of the magic of my first husband, but the Siraha cured me.

5

IV

Yet in spite of such occasional breaches of the rules, the *jodidar* ghotul remains a school of marital fidelity. Severe penalties attach to the discovery of the cloth of a girl other than your own on a mat or to the taking advantage

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[171]

[1] Roy describes a similar act of corporate violation as a punishment inflicted on a girl in the Uraon *dhumkuria*. 'Should a girl refuse to come when sent for, a number of young boys are despatched to bring her by force. When she is brought, should she refuse to elect a mate, a number of older boys violate her one after the other, until she names the boy she would have for her mate.'—S. C. Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 246. Sir E. A. Gait wrote: 'I have been told that if an Oraon girl is thought unduly coy all the youths of the village combine against her and get her deflowered by one or more of their number.'—J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. II, p. 287n. In the Kondabera ghotul, there was once a 'strike' and the girls, so the chelik told me, 'decided not to let us have them. We all decided to take them by force one night, and so we did'. But I doubt if this often happens either in Bastar or Chota Nagpur. I have, however, found parallel incidents among the Gond and Pardhan of Mandla. It is perhaps worth noting that if a Bororo Indian suspected his wife of infidelity, he put her at the disposal of the young men in the *baito*-dormitory.—V. Fric and P. Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 390.

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883^{x}

836 The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable.

883^{x} 836 583 They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *jodidar* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul.

883^{x} 836 586 Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people.

883^{x} 836 152 Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—as they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Benjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'.

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurdi, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

883^{x} 836 762 It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered

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762

as due to the separation of a chelik from his motiari. This occurred in 1932 and was, as we should expect, in a *jodidär* ghotul, at Amgaon in the Karangal Pargana. Chaitu and Munga—I do not know their ghotul titles—the boy about twenty years old and the girl about eighteen—were greatly attached to each other and dreaded the thought of separation. They each begged their parents to let them marry, but Munga's father was adamant and married her to Dasru of the Markabera ghotul, a different Dasru, of course, from the one I have just mentioned. After the marriage she was taken to Markabera, where the chelik diverted themselves as usual by shutting her up with the new husband whom she did not love. Before she left Amgaon, she was taken round the village to say good-bye and every household made their contributions for the ghotul feast that would be held a week after the marriage.

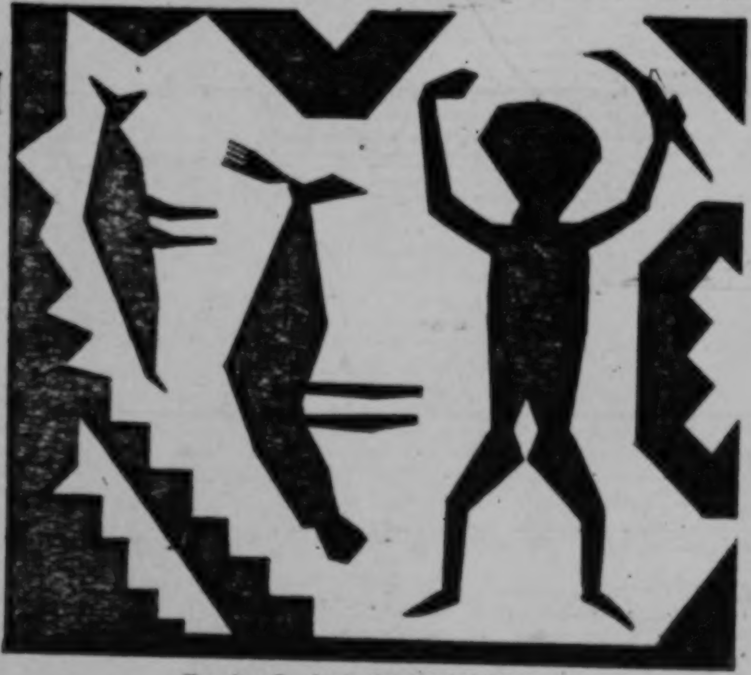

FIG. 60. Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar
Height 4½"

When the time came, chelik and motiari went singing through the pretty wooded country that separates Amgaon from Markabera and invited Munga to the feast. Her husband could not refuse, though he must have known there was danger in Amgaon, but it was so near—only two miles away—that he let her go. When she reached her old home, she went to meet Chaitu in the lonely corner of a field; he had brought some liquor for her, and they sat down to have a farewell drink together. But a little girl, Chaitu's younger sister, followed them and ran to tell her father. He hurried to the spot, caught the two lovers

together, and beat the boy, telling him that the girl was no longer his, and that 883x
such meetings would bring scandal upon them all. Behind those slaps how much 836
one can see of parental exasperation over a long and troublesome intrigue, 762
almost certainly parental envy of a son entranced by love, and the usual Muria dread of adultery—a very genuine sentiment.

Boy and girl ran away—I can see their quick Muria nature dissolved in tears and anger—and returned to the ghotul for the feast that sealed their separation. Munga had to massage every chelik after supper as a farewell rite, but then, when all was quiet, they crept together out of the ghotul to the woods. That night—it was 20 May 1932—they climbed onto the great branch of a mango tree, tied and adjusted ropes, and facing one another fell to death. When they were found, Chaitu had his hand upon his motiari's shoulder.

V

Although outwardly both types of ghotul are the same and often only the 883x
most careful investigation can distinguish them, the customs and atmosphere
of the modern type are entirely distinct. Here everything is arranged to 836
prevent long-drawn intense attachments, to eliminate jealousy and possessiveness, to deepen the sense of communal property and action. No chelik may regard a motiari as 'his'. There is no ghotul marriage, there are no ghotul partners. 'Everyone belongs to everyone else' in the very spirit of *Brave New World*. A chelik and motiari may sleep together for three nights; after that they are warned; if they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he has no *haq* or right over her, she is the *mal* or property of the whole ghotul, and if he looks like that he will be punished.

This type of ghotul is sometimes called the *mandi-badalna* because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change your rings from finger to finger.

How is it that this type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical *jodidar* dormitory? Why is the process of change from one type to the other continuing today? There are many reasons.

In the Berrar Pargana and at Koilibera I heard the phrase 'so that they will not be ruined by love'. This is certainly a genuine consideration. Too much love before marriage will mean too little *after* it. Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient debts; it often turns out unsuccessful. In villages where several such elopements have occurred within a short time, the rules of the ghotul have been changed.

The modern rules are also intended as a contraceptive measure. The Muria 883x
believe that conception only occurs when the male and female remain together
for a long period and enjoy an uninterrupted series of acts of coition with no 836
divergence of interest. Both psychological and physical concentration in 842
fidelity to a single partner is required for pregnancy.

A former Chalan of Golawand, for example, described how he consistently changed his ghotul partners and never made anyone pregnant; but two friends of his in the same ghotul slept every day with the same girls and impregnated x 883 them both. The Gaita at Kollibera said that a chelik could have congress three times a night and it would do no harm, but if he went to the same girl 836 more than three days running he would fall ill and she might conceive.

842 The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of conception. Statistics, however, show that this is not so. Among 2000 men, 80 made motiari pregnant during their ghotul period; of these 25 or 1 in 28·8 belonged to *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 or 1 in 23·2 to the modern type.

[531]

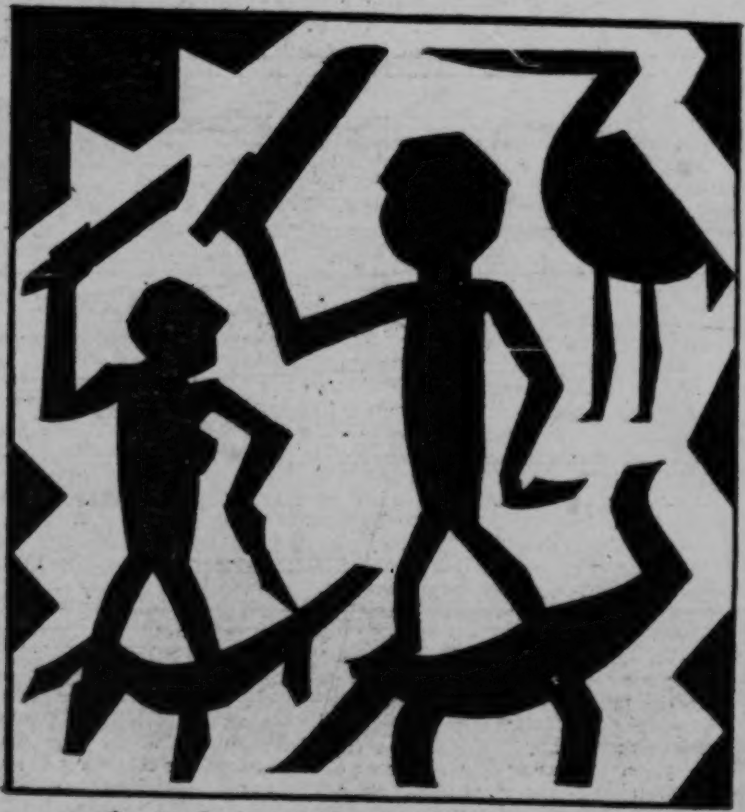

FIG. 61. Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal
Slightly enlarged

x 883 A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness, 836 and to any kind of 'possessiveness'. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. I am not at the moment thinking whether this is true or not, but it is certainly what

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they think. 'If we get jealous of each other', they said at Nayanar, 'we exchange lovers.' At Esalnar a chelik said, 'We change partners because we want everyone to be happy; if one boy and one girl are always together as if they were man and wife, then some would be happier than others; the best boys and the best girls would be the property of individuals instead of being the property of the ghotul, and the rest would be miserable'. When someone told the chelik at Kabonga that they were behaving like a lot of goats, they indignantly explained that 'if a girl always sleeps with one boy, we feel that the unity of our life is being destroyed; in a ghotul all the girls should be the wives of all the boys'. In Bhanpuri they used a similar phrase that 'all the girls are the wives of the Kotwar', meaning that since the Kotwar is in charge of them and has the task of distributing them among the chelik, they must all be regarded as his wives in his capacity as a representative of the ghotul.

The result of this arrangement is—according to Muria theory—that everybody in the ghotul is in love with everybody else. 'Boys and girls in a ghotul love each other as brothers love sisters, as parents love children, as husbands love their wives.' It is remarkable that this general diffused love and affection among chelik and motiari should lead them to identify parental, family and romantic love.

In Masora the boys gave as a reason for changing their partners the very human liking for change, 'love's sweetest part, variety'. One of them said, 'You don't want to eat the same vegetable every day'. The change of object undoubtedly stimulates the sexual instinct and makes ghotul life more exciting. But since the whole tendency of Muria society is towards stability, I doubt if the desire for variety has played a very important part in the development of the ghotul rules.[1]

Another reason for the change of rules, given this time by the chelik of Sidhawand, was that if a chelik was always going about with the same motiari, the elders of the village would notice it and suspect that they had sexual relations. Yet at Chandabera, where there is a *jodidār* ghotul, the Muria claimed that the boys and girls behaved with so much discretion that no one could ever guess how they were paired off. Here we come up against the strange convention that the elders of the village have no idea of what goes on in the ghotul, where they all spent their own childhood, but suppose it to be, as they said again at Sidhawand (where some had been to school), 'a sort of Boy Scouts Club, whose members meet together for social service and for nothing else'.

The extent of this convention should not be exaggerated. The elders are often equally prepared to make the most indecent comments on the sexual activities of the younger generation. But in the presence of outsiders at least, there is a general tendency to make a show of the decorum of village life.

Of this type of ghotul, Evelyn Wood has asked how its ideal can be achieved 'without a sense of universal futility and frustration caused by such lavish dissipation of libidal power'. The answer to this is, I think, that we must

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[1] The ghotul evidence hardly supports Bloch, who has based his belief in an original state of promiscuity largely on the human desire for change. 'It is perfectly clear', he says, 'that the human need for sexual variety, which is an established anthropological phenomenon, must in primitive times have been much stronger and more unbridled. Since even in our time, in a state of the most advanced civilization, this natural need for variety continues to manifest itself in almost undiminished strength, we can hardly regard it as necessary to prove that in primitive conditions sexual promiscuity was a more original, and, indeed, a more natural state than marriage.'—I. Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time* (London, 1908), p. 192. But the history of the ghotul shows that it is the desire for permanence that is original; it is only the modern type of dormitory that attempts 'to do justice to the human need for sexual variety'.

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not overestimate the extent of ghotul promiscuity. There is no kind of orgy or licence; everything is strictly regulated and conducted with the utmost decorum. The average ghotul is small, with not more than twenty members. Of these twenty, several are bound to be closely related or of the same clan. In Palli, for example, which is a large ghotul, only three clans were represented, in Kajen only two. Moreover these boys and girls have grown up together from babyhood. When, therefore, we read that a chelik has to sleep with a new girl every three days, we are not to think of him as being able to pick and choose from an endless procession of new and exciting girls. He is going to spend his time in rotation among a little group of girls every one of whom he knows very well indeed. There is no doubt a certain dissipation of libidal energy, but I do not think that, except perhaps in the very large ghotul, it is excessive.

And further, a boy is not generally able to choose his partner at will. It is the Kotwar, in consultation with the Belosa, who decides how the chelik and motiari are to couple and when they are to change their partners. For example, at Kabonga the Kotwar himself told me, 'I am the Raja of the motiari and every two or three days I rearrange them and tell the Belosa who is to sleep with whom'. In Dongrigura, the Kotwar himself had the privilege of a permanent partner, and he and his 'wife' made arrangements for the rest. There was the same custom in the neighbouring Palari. In Binjhli, it was the leading girls who made these arrangements.[1]

The rules differ from place to place. At Bakulwahi, where the girls slept in the ghotul only on Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and where there were in 1941 more chelik than motiari, the following procedure was adopted. Suppose there were thirty chelik and ten motiari, then on Sunday the motiari would comb the hair of all the chelik, but they would leave their combs in the hair of only ten as a sign that on that night those boys would have partners on their sleeping-mats. On Wednesday the girls would leave their combs in the hair of another ten; so also on Thursday. In this way every chelik was able to sleep with one of the motiari once a week. Should a girl not distribute her affections equally, she was punished, and should she leave her comb in the hair of the same boy two nights running she was heavily fined.

The typical Muria emphasis on equality is shown by an explanation given by the chelik of this ghotul when I raised the point that it was surely unusual that the number of girls could be divided so conveniently into the number of boys. If that were impossible, they pointed out, if for example there were twelve girls to the thirty boys, then twelve boys would sleep with twelve girls on Sunday and another twelve boys with the twelve girls on Wednesday. By Thursday only six boys would remain unpartnered for that week. On that night only six girls would leave their combs in the hair of these boys, and the other six girls and the other twenty-four boys would sleep alone. Any other arrangement would destroy the unity of the ghotul.

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[1] With this we may compare the very interesting arrangements of the Masai manyatta-dormitory. When the warriors feel like it, which is 'very, very often', they go in a group to stand outside the village and call to the girls. These approach and the warriors then say 'Tasiukin!' whereupon each girl selects one of the men; by her choice she binds herself to sleep with him that night. 'It is a point of honour and etiquette that no girl so called upon to choose a man may refuse to do so, but she may make her choice from any of those men who were in the group that called to her.' The Masai also have a system of selecting permanent lovers, though these can still sleep with other partners—but the permanent lovers can sleep together without formality whenever they desire.—L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, pp. 192ff.

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

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At Esalnar there is a different arrangement. Here a motiari sleeps with a chelik for two months and during this period she takes as her title the feminine form of his name. Thus a girl who is temporarily sleeping with the Tahsildar is temporarily Tahsildarin. When she changes her partner and goes to sleep with the Kotwar, then for two months she is called Kotwarin. This arrangement is formally announced in the ghotul, and the girl and boy exchange rings which they return to each other when their period of partnership is ended.

'Does not this arrangement', I asked, 'destroy one of the chief reasons for changing partners, namely, that conception is less likely when a boy and girl do not sleep together for too long a period?' In order to avoid this danger, the boys explained, the rule at Esalnar is that no one may have intercourse without special permission from the council of elder boys. During the two months, they said, this permission was only given about once a week. When the bigger boys decide on it they tell the Kotwar. He goes to the girls and says, 'Today, girls, you may eat tobacco and lime'. Then he says to each in turn, 'Are you going to eat your tobacco or not?' and each is expected to say 'Yes'. If a girl says 'No', he replies, 'Then why did you come to the ghotul? If you behave like this, we will turn you out'.

The following morning the Tahsildar and Kotwar sit by the door and ask each girl in turn as she goes out, 'Did you eat your tobacco last night or no?' If the girl says 'Yes' she is allowed to go, but if anyone says 'No' then her chelik is fined a pice for loss of prestige.

A remarkable thing about these arrangements is that they interfere with the normal course of sexual selection. The beautiful girl and the ugly, or even deformed girl has exactly the same sexual opportunity, exactly the same sexual privilege. So with the boys. In Bhanpuri the Daroga was blind; in Chandabera the Kotwar was a cripple; elsewhere I have seen boys with hare-lips, deeply pitted with small-pox, repulsive with yaws, but every one of them officially had the same privileges as the most handsome and adorable chelik. The Chandabera Kotwar, indeed, was 'married' (for it was that kind of ghotul) to the prettiest girl in the whole company. A girl must be prepared to go to any member of the ghotul fellowship. For example, in Sirpuri, the rather mediocre Sirdar was very much in love with a beautiful girl, the Malko, who treated him with disdain. When he tried to talk to her, she abused him and drove him away. Although she was more than once told to sleep with him, she managed to arrange to exchange him for another boy. After this had happened for a little while, the Sirdar reported the matter to the Diwan who said, 'Try for a few days more and let's see what happens'. When she still refused, the Diwan called for the Kotwar and told him to adjust the matter. The Kotwar went to the Malko and said, 'What did you come to the ghotul for? Did you come for your own pleasure or for ours? Did you come to play with us or to sulk? If you want to sulk you had better sleep at home.'

Still the Malko refused to have anything to do with the Sirdar and at last the boys expelled her from the ghotul. We must remember that she was a beautiful girl and was giving her affection freely to the very boys who expelled her, but she was breaking the integrity and fellowship of the ghotul, so she had to go. After a little while, however, she gave in. She paid a fine of two annas' worth of liquor, was readmitted and that night slept with the Sirdar.

I recorded a similar incident in Kabonga, where the Belosa disliked the Kotwar and preferred to be expelled from the ghotul rather than sleep with him, but in the end she too gave in.

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It is equally offensive to the ghotul spirit for a chelik and motiari to fall openly in love and to insist on sleeping together to the exclusion of the rest. When they do this the others get jealous and irritated. If a girl, who has thus given way to her feelings, then goes to comb the hair of another boy, he says, 'Don't touch my head, go and do your lover's; I am not a boy, you never take any notice of me'. None of the chelik will let her massage them. If this treatment is not successful they catch the offenders by the hand and drag them out of the ghotul saying, 'Come no more to our ghotul, sleep in your own houses, have a lonely marriage without us, for we won't come to it'. In Kabonga, where such an incident occurred in 1941, the Kotwar said that after they had expelled the boy and girl, the boy very quickly repented, paid a fine of liquor and was readmitted. The girl was more obstinate. After a time the Kotwar went to her house and said that if she would sleep with each of the three leading boys on three successive nights, he would let her return. In the end she agreed to this and was accepted back into the ghotul. A similar incident occurred at Sirsi where a girl insisted on trying to sleep always with the same boy. The others said, 'Is there only one chelik? Aren't we chelik too?' and at last turned them both out. They were only readmitted when they gave a rupee's worth of liquor to the company.

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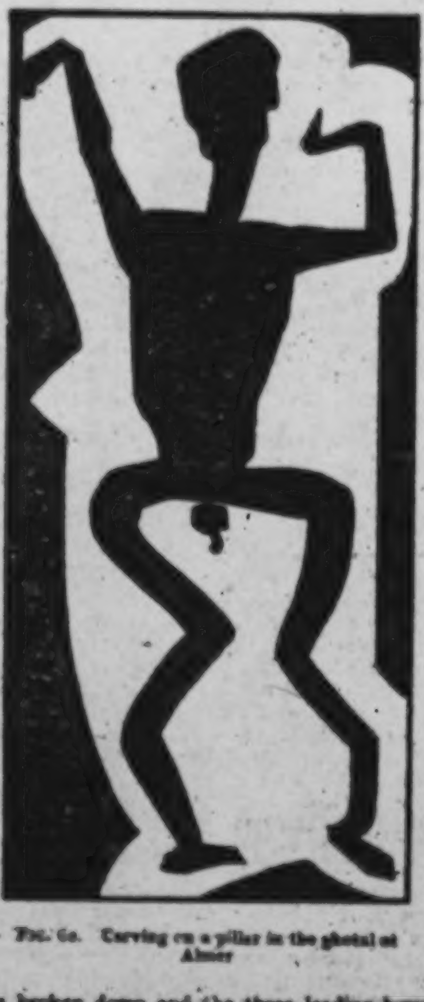

FIG. 60. Carving on a pillar in the ghotul at Almer

In a number of ghotul this system of complete equality has broken down and the three leading boys, the Sirdar or Diwan and his counsellors, including probably the Kotwar, have the right either to have a permanent partner just as in the older type of ghotul, or to choose their own partner whenever a change is made, without reference to the Kotwar. When this is done, and it happens generally in the bigger ghotul where there may be as many as sixty or seventy members, the leaders still insist on the rule of

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change being rigorously observed by all the others. Sometimes the three leading boys allot to themselves the three leading girls and exchange them between themselves, but do not allow them to go to the others. This is recognized as hostile to genuine ghotul tradition; for it does indeed offend against the ideal of equality.

In Banjora, the Kotwar, who there is the head of the ghotul, must always sleep with the Belosa or leader of the girls. The other chelik and motiari must change their partners every three days. The rule is that the Kotwar's mate must be the head of the girls and be called Belosa. Supposing the Kotwar gets married, then the new Kotwar must take the Belosa as his partner, but if both are of the same clan or closely related then the new Kotwar gets a new girl as his permanent partner and she calls herself Belosa while the old Belosa changes her name and loses her position. In this way Kotwar and Belosa always sleep together and rule the ghotul.

Another way in which the rules are broken is by simple evasion. In his memoirs, Bindo, who was head of the Benur ghotul sixty years ago, describes how he formed an attachment for the Malko.

> For a whole year we slept together. But the rule was that Malko could not sleep daily with the same boy. So what did we do? I used to sleep alone in a corner, and she would lie down with some other boy. When all were asleep she would get up and come to me. There was another beautiful girl in our ghotul, the Dulosa, who also loved me. She often came to me. So I used to sleep with Malko some nights and with Dulosa other nights. The chelik and motiari knew about it, but they were afraid to say anything as I was their leader.

In Binjhili also, I was told that lovers would arrange to meet earlier in the evening before going to the ghotul. The experiences of Konda, the secular headman of Kanhargaon, are worth recording.

> Formerly in the Kanhargaon ghotul, it was the custom to exchange partners. Before I was made Joliya, little girls used to sleep with me, afterwards I slept with the big girls. The Jhalaro, who was related to me as a distant cousin, loved me, so did the Piosa, who was in a joking relationship with me. The Piosa used to sleep with me every night, but secretly, and when she had no partner the Jhalaro also crept stealthily to my mat when all the others were asleep. These two girls used to make necklaces for me and in return I made them combs, and often gave them a few pice when they went to the bazaar. If at any time I was absent from the ghotul, the Jhalaro and Piosa would come to my house and by some means or other would drag me there. When the Sirdar discovered that the Jhalaro was sleeping with me, he fined her two annas' worth of liquor and I was warned that if I let her sleep with me again I would be fined a rupee and would be responsible to the elders of the village if anything happened. Unfortunately, the Jhalaro became pregnant, and when I learnt that the fact was known to everyone I got frightened and ran away to Malakot. In my absence Jhalaro's parents hurriedly had her married to her betrothed. I then returned to Kanhargaon and the next day went with the other ghotul boys to Phunder to dance the Pus Kolang. On our way home we were all drunk and the other boys quarrelled with me. They accused me of disgracing the ghotul's name and would not let me return with them. But I offered them eight annas for liquor and we became friends.

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One day when I met the Piosa in the Dhanora bazaar I gave her some gur and parched rice and we planned to elope to another village. But when the Piosa returned home she fell ill, and after a few days she died.

VI

It will be convenient to consider here some other deviations from the classic ghotul model. In a number of villages, although the girls attend the ghotul every evening for singing, dancing and games, and even comb the chelik's hair and massage their limbs, they do not sleep in the dormitory, but go away late at night either to a house of their own or to the verandah of some old widow's house.

In such ghotul there is generally a rule that the girls may sleep in the dormitory once or twice a week and at festivals and marriages. An absolute ban on cohabitation is unusual. For example, in Binjhli, where the ghotul life is highly developed, there is massage once a week on Fridays and that night the chelik and motiari sleep together. On other nights the girls go home to any convenient house. But they stay in the ghotul for a very long time, and the boys say that they often have intercourse with them before they go away. The girls also told my wife the same. In the neighbouring village of Palki, there is a similar custom, but here there are two ghotul in one compound. Girls and boys sleep separately all the week except on the bazaar day, Wednesday. In both ghotul this rule of separation is relaxed on festivals, before marriages and when girls or boys return from dancing expeditions. In the Kalpatti Pargana and in Kanker State, the motiari generally go home about midnight after games and massage (though they often lie down for a time with the boys before they go), but at festivals and for eight days before a marriage chelik and motiari sleep together. In Tarbaili, in the Paralkot area, the boys said that they saw the girls home after dancing and had intercourse with them on the way. In Palli, near Kondagaon, where the girls and boys sleep in different rooms of someone's house, they meet every fifth day for massage and to sleep together. In the Nayanar ghotul, they said that they slept together for one week in every month, but for the other three weeks the girls went home in the evening. I doubt, however, if this was true—of Nayanar.

The reason for this arrangement, which is generally a temporary one, is almost always some scandal that has agitated the elders of the village. In Karagaon it is said that two boys combined to make a girl pregnant. They had to pay five rupees fine between them and the girl was married at once to her Lamhada. The motiari found that they had got a good deal of discredit out of this incident and after a time went to the village headman and said that it was not their fault, for the boys forced them to have intercourse. So the elders ordered that the boys and girls were only to sleep together every third day: for two days they must be separate; on the third day they could come together, but even then they must change their partners every time. In Kerawahi four or five years ago the ghotul Kotwar eloped with the Seliyaro. Since then the girls have only been allowed to sleep in the ghotul one day a week. Similar stories come from Bokrabera, Kokori, where two years ago three or four girls became pregnant, and Bakulwahi.

The aim of this rule is not so much to punish the boys and girls or to educate them in self-restraint as to avert conception, and is based on the Muria belief that pregnancy only occurs as a result of regular cohabitation night after night over a long period. By breaking up the acts of intercourse and lessening their frequency the chances of conception are supposed to be diminished.

Plate LXXI

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The Hikmi of Almer removes wood from the ghótul stack

[p.350(A)]

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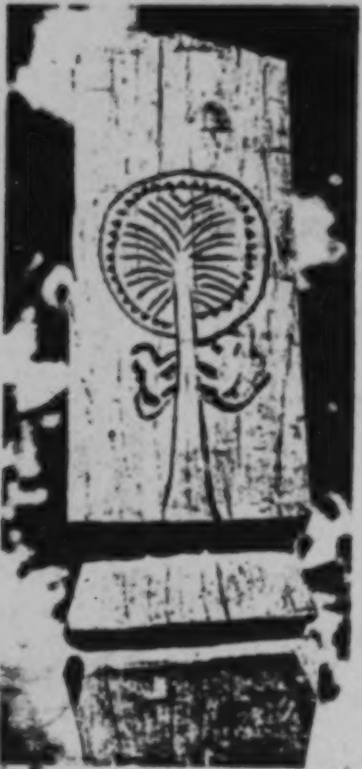
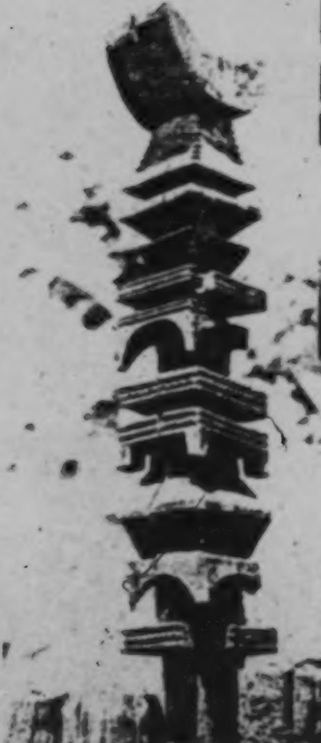
Carved pillar at
Chandabera

Plate LXXII





Carved pillar at
Remawand

[p.350 (B)]

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

x 883 836 177 In a certain number of ghotul, particularly those all round the boundary of the Muria area, where the villagers have come under strong Chhattisgarhi and Oriya or Jagdalpur influence, the girls probably never sleep in the ghotul, but this is the sort of thing about which it is impossible to be sure. In some Hindu villages also, where there is only a small Muria population, the motiari return home regularly in order to avoid the ridicule of their Hindu neighbours. This is particularly true of the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil.

In some villages the ghotul has been abandoned altogether. The reasons for this vary. In the south-east of Kondagaon, where many of the Muria in villages approaching the borders of Jagdalpur Tahsil are becoming Bhattra, they naturally have given up the ghotul as an institution. In Kanera, for example, where the Bhattra movement is strong, there is no ghotul building though the boys sleep together in somebody's house and the girls still come to dance and to massage them. In the Amrati and Makri Parganas a number of villages have gone Bhattra with a consequent closing of the ghotul.

x 883 836 Then throughout the Mardapal Pargana, except in one or two villages, Esalnar for example, there have been no ghotul within living memory. This is more curious because the Mardapal Pargana is closely linked to the Chota Dongar and other Jhoria Parganas. The boys and girls dress and dance in Jhoria fashion; they have the same games; they go to the same festivals as the chelik and motiari of the villages to the north and west of them, but they do not have the ghotul system.

Sometimes magic or the fear of it is the cause of a dormitory being abandoned. There is no ghotul in Barbatta, for at one time many of the chelik and motiari died of an epidemic. It is said, however, that they still sleep together in a private house in the village. In Barkai a jealous Kalarin witch made black magic against the ghotul and many of the boys and girls were taken ill. They made the necessary sacrifices and all was well for two months. They fell ill again and this time they built a new ghotul, but there was still trouble. So now the dormitory is closed altogether. At Lihagaon continued epidemics, which naturally spread quickly in the confined conditions of the dormitory, combined with several scandals, resulted in the abandonment of any special building, though the chelik and motiari continue much of their life without it. At Morohnar, the Malik made his motiari pregnant and went to live in Kanera. At Kanera he eloped with another girl and married her. 'This angered the gods, and the chelik and motiari of Morohnar fell ill.' The ghotul was shut for two months, re-opened, the members fell ill again, and it was finally closed.

x 883 836 177 Sometimes outside interference is the cause. At Dahikonga, the Hindu landlord forced the Muria to destroy their ghotul. At Selnar, where there is a primary school, the teachers have succeeded in driving the ghotul life underground and all that clean, healthy, happy existence has yielded to furtive meetings on verandahs and in the fields. In Pendrawand, the ghotul was closed under the influence of outsiders from across the border, but the boys and girls use a dilapidated Thana-gudi when it is unoccupied.[1]

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[1] Somewhat similar causes have led to the abandonment of the *dhumkuria* dormitories in several Uraon villages. In Kumbhar Tola, a Hinduized Uraon village only four miles from Ranchi, there was no *dhumkuria*. In a village near the Jashpur border, where there was a large Church, and in another village near Lohadaga, the people professed that they had not even heard the word *dhumkuria* and an elderly Uraon became quite offensive at the suggestion that there was such a thing in his village. At Agru I saw the ruined building of a dormitory which had been abandoned, because they could not afford, so they said, to replace the roof. But since at Agru there was a fine dancing-floor, there was probably some other reason—a mysterious death, or a scandal—which accounted for the *dhumkuria's* collapse. Roy says that 'in one village we were told that long ago a

CHAPTER TWELVE

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

I

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IN the first splendid ghotul, with its peacock roof and door of ogre's bones, Lingo gave the boys and girls names and duties. The oldest stories say that the first chelik were Mankor Singa, Jiha Guta Soma and Karsta Guta Soma, and the first motiari Godakare Mode, Belosa and Kurumtuse Buke; the later tales give the girls' names as Belosa, Manjaro, Jalko and Dulosa. Lingo's own ghotul name was Manjhi. Since then every boy and girl, on becoming a full member of the dormitory, has received a title.

These titles are of great significance. Until they receive them, the children have no standing; they cannot get 'ghotul-mates'; they are the servants and drudges of the others. But once they are named they enter into the full equality of the ghotul fellowship. They now almost forget their *mur podor* or home name, which must never be used in the ghotul or by the other children, and is indeed hardly ever used except at home, by parents and close relatives, or for some official purpose.

An ordinary name is often ugly or unkind, but the ghotul title has the tenderest and happiest associations, charged with romantic memories. For this reason it is never used by parents, who must pretend not to know it. A boy may sometimes tell his father his name but the girls never reveal it in the home. After marriage, a boy goes on using his title as indeed he continues for a time to exercise his old office; but a girl must never allow people to address her by a name which has so many memories of the free days of youth (though an old lover may, rarely, use it for that very reason), she should not call her husband by his old title, or refer in any way to hers in his presence. But I am told that when a group of old women who were once members of the same ghotul get together, they call each other by their ghotul names 'to remind themselves of happiness'. Close friends continue to address one another in this way all their lives.

For everybody treasures the memory of his title. When visiting the Jagdalpur jail, I found the sulkiest Muria prisoners expand into beaming smiles when I addressed them by their old ghotul names.

As the children grow older, they are promoted from rank to rank in the ghotul hierarchy, and their titles are often changed. Sometimes, however, they are too attached to their original title to give it up. This may be one reason for the great diversity in the names of the leaders in different places. In different ghotul I have found the leader called variously Sirdar, Kotwar, Malik, Diwan, Jhoria, Malguzar, Silledar, Salya and Gaita, though elsewhere these titles may be given to quite junior boys. On the other hand, the majority of girls call their leader Belosa, though at Markabera she was Malko, in Binjhli Manjaro and in a group of three villages (Udanpur, Kapsi and Timnar) she

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tiger carried off two boys from the *dhumkuria* house and since then the house has been abandoned and allowed to fall into ruins, under the belief that the tiger indicated the will of the gods that the village should no longer maintain a public *dhumkuria* building'.—Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 213. W. G. Archer has studied the distribution of the Uraon dormitory, and the areas where it has disappeared, on the basis of information collected at the 1941 census.—*Man in India*, Vol. XXV, No. 1.

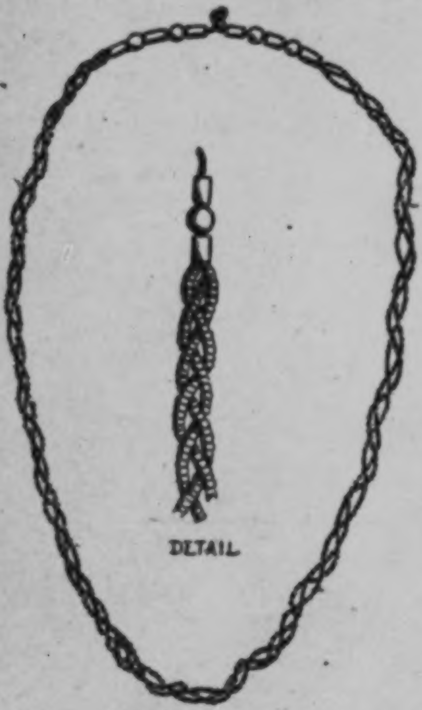


Fig. 63. Karajaruer necklace from Palli. The beads are dark blue

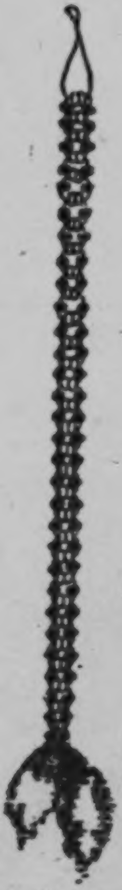
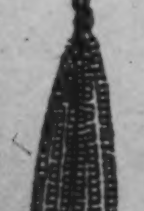


Fig. 64. Jhoria ear-drops from Nayanar, of red, white and blue beads, with small tufts of red wool at the bottom



was Suliyaro. There is no rule about this, and the children change their names as often as they retain them.

There is indeed no fixed list of titles with an order of precedence. In one village the Kotwar may be a subordinate; in the next he may be the leader. The Raja may rank below the Diwan, or the Tahsildar below the Constable. In the same way, though many of the titles carry duties with them, it is impossible to say that these duties will always be associated with the same titles. In Silati village, the Munshi has to see to the supply of wood, but in Taragaon it is the Tekedar who does this, while the Munshi has to 'write' reports about absentees. In Haddigaon, it is the Budkher who collects the children and brings them to the ghotul; in the neighbouring Palli, it is the Sirdar.

Throughout this book, however, in order to avoid endless qualification of every statement, I call the leading chelik the Sirdar, the leading motiari the Belosa, and the chelik in charge of the girls the Kotwar, except—of course—when I am quoting actual incidents that have occurred in a particular ghotul, where different titles may be required.

I will give here a few lists of names and titles as they were in 1941—it must be remembered that they change every year. A list of all titles in alphabetical order will be found in Appendix III. The following were the boys and girls in the Kabonga ghotul with their duties, in order of precedence.

Chelik of Kabonga

Diwan Sirdar Mukhwan	These form the 'supreme council' which controls the affairs of both boys and girls.
Kotwar Chalan	These have the special task of seeing to the attendance and behaviour of the girls.
Munshi	Keeps an account of all that is done.
Jamadar	Sees that the girls have a proper supply of combs.
Kandki	Entertains visitors from other ghotul.
Dafedar Baidar	See to the cleanliness of the ghotul, and keep the roof thatch in order.
Kajanti Chalki	Attend to the tobacco supply. The Kajanti must offer it to visitors.
Bara Pahadar Nani Pahadar	Attend to seating arrangements. They give mats to visitors, and if little boys are sitting on mats they turn them off for the elders.
Kamdar Beldar Chowkidar Likhen	These are 'subjects' whose only function is to do what they are told.

Motiari of Kabonga

Belosa Dulosa	The leaders of all the girls who arrange how every-one is to sleep, and see that their 'subjects' perform their duties properly.

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Tiloka Nirosa Piosa Janko Malko Jankai Manka Jumki Alosa	These all have to clean the ghotul, bring leaves and make them into plates, cups and leaf-pipes, comb and massage the boys, and perform any other task allotted to them by the Belosa, Dulosa or Diwan.

Kabonga is a village in north-central Kondagaon. I will now give a list from Esalnar, a 'Jhoria' village of the Mardapal Pargana, very near the Chota Dongar Hills.

Chalik of Esalnar

Diwan	Head of both boys and girls. The final judge in all disputes.
Manager Tahsildar Sirkil	Assistants to the Diwan.
Mukhwan	Inspector of the boys. Reports absentees to the Diwan.
Kotwar	In charge of the girls. Controls their discipline and work.
Inspector	Looks after visitors, provides them with mats and wooden pillows.
Pahardar	Administers punishments imposed by the Diwan. When there is too much noise keeps the children quiet.
Dafedar	Sees to the supply of wood.
Munshi	Arranges for the cleaning of the ghotul's surroundings and approaches.
Chalki	Looks after the drums, and sees there is string to hang them from the roof.
Gaita	Collects fines and has charge of them.
Havaldar	Must recover anything lost during a dance.
Kajanchi	Looks after the tobacco. Must see that there is enough for elders and visitors.
Ijardar	At any ceremony the liquor is kept in his charge.
Mukkadam Baidar Saidar	'Subjects' who have no special duties.

In this village the girls' names are simply feminine forms of those of their ghotul partners—Diwanin, Managerin, Kotwarin. The order of precedence is the same as for the boys. As in Kabonga, the girls do not have separate

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individual duties, but the two leaders, under the direction of the Kotwar, allot them their tasks as need arises.

I will give one more list, from Karikhodra near Antagarh in the north—the village where Lingo is said to have passed his supreme ordeal of oil and fire. Here the old Gondi titles are more prominent.

Chelik of Karikhodra

Manjhi	The leader. Passes judgements and inflicts fines.
Diwan	He examines the reports of the Singga.
Singga	He is in charge of the girls and reports defaulters.
Beldar	These are all 'subjects'. Special duties are not allotted. They have simply to obey the orders of the three leaders.
Karati	
Alorsinh	
Jhaliarsinh	
Jolsay	
Daidar	
Subedar	
Laharsinh	
Salikrai	
Laharu	
Jhoria	
Kapatdar	
Kosa	
Milledar	
Kanjus	

Motiari of Karikhodra

Belosa	The head of the girls, 'the Rani'.
Dulosa	Her assistant, 'the Diwanin'.
Mularo	These are all 'subjects', who have to perform their ghotul duties irrespective of the titles they hold.
Muliyaro	
Salho	
Mulki	
Tiloka	
Suliyaro	
Malko	
Chaiko	
Achhoke	
Jilmili	
Laharo	

The names in these lists are given in order of precedence, an order that is strictly observed. If the senior boys and girls are away—working in the fields or on the roads, for example—the younger boys and girls occupy their positions with dignity and zeal. In Masora once, all the elder boys were away in the fields watching the crops, with the result that the Jamadar, a charming youth called Dulsai, was in charge. No one could have fulfilled the duties of leader, judge and father with more zest.

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Some special duties were recorded at Kokori, where the Chalan had to provide an escort home for visitors and the Likhen had to clean the drums

1 and 3 Carved pillars at Chandabera

2 Carving on the pillar of a shrine at Phanda

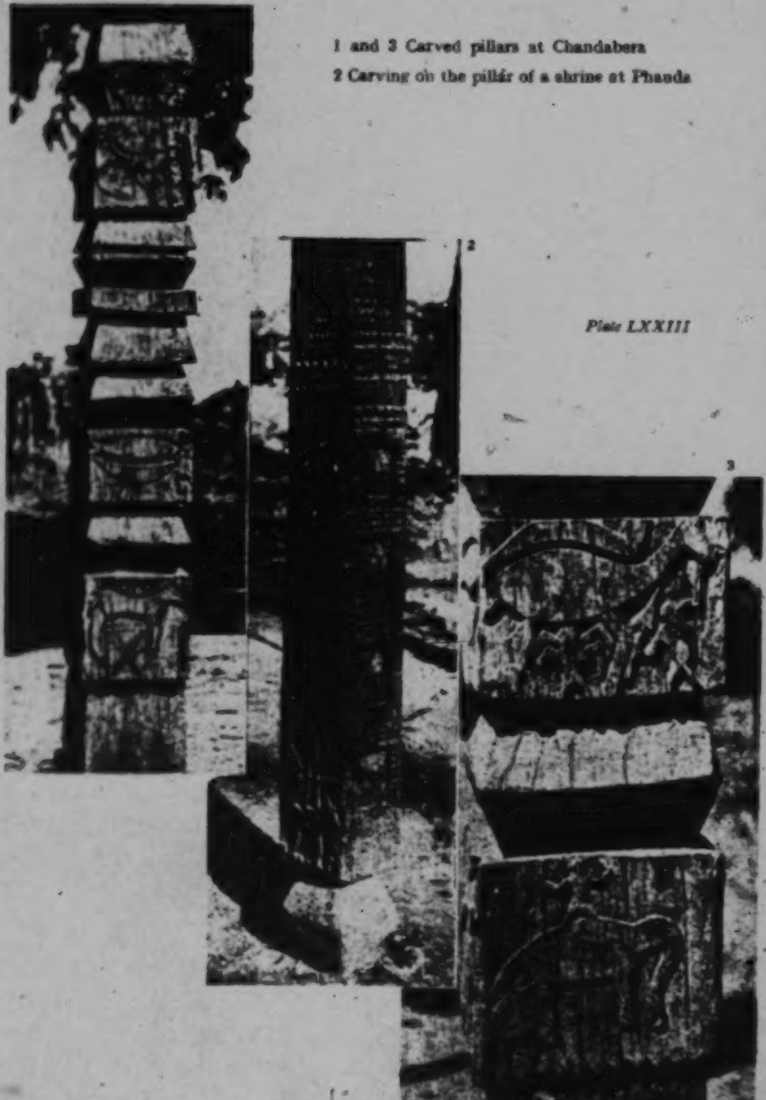

Plate LXXIII

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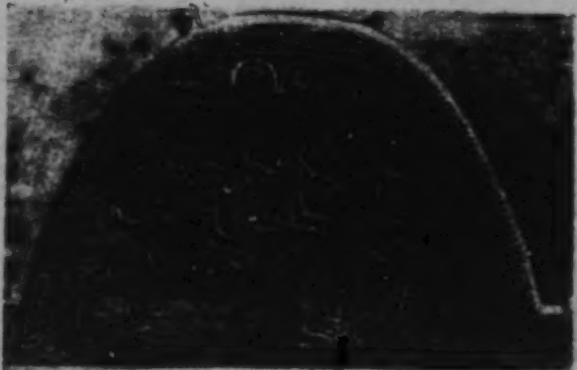
Pillar at Binjhe
with the chelik
who carved it

Drawing
old cens
number-l

Plate LXXIV

[534]



Carved
a pit
drum
Desig

[p.356(b)]

X 883 with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

X 883 539 In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dāhāt roy sango ned weke dāhāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āking dāhāt roy sango marm āking dāhāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oyhāt roy sango won tori oyhāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

X 883 551 In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalau for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalau. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-wife of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

X 883 551 177 The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Dakdar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

X 883 551 Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *bāri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul, Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

X883 883 and is perhaps given to a lazy boy, Meliya from the Gondi verb 'to wander', or Jelu which means 'an obstructive fellow'.

551 Some of the girls' names are very pretty; such are the Gondi Alosa, 'pleasant-spoken', Dulosa—a corruption of the Hindi *dulocha*, soft; Malko, a peahen—Plate CXII shows how fitting the title can be; the Hindi Mulari, the 'precious one'; the Gondi Saile, 'friendly'; and Belosa, perhaps derived from the bel tree.

A few titles appear to have been given in derision to boys or girls who have been caught misbehaving in the ghotul. Thus Hagru and Mutra or Mutri have reference to natural functions which may not be performed inside the building; Padru is given to a flatulent boy and Bandri to a smelly little girl.

Some other titles seem to be chosen for their sound rather than their meaning: Jelkar, which comes from a Gondi word meaning a 'ripple on water', is probably chosen for its likeness to Jailer and Budhker; Jalla or Jallam is a Hindi word meaning a 'spider's web'—perhaps Jallam was taken as a pun on Salam, another ghotul title. And I think some of the titles like Tiliyaro (which has a reference to tilli pulse), Siliyaro (the Gondi for a vegetable) and Jaliyaro are primarily chosen just because they sound attractive. So too, among chelik's titles, Paseldar (owner of mung pulse) is nothing more than a parody of Tahsildar or Isealdar.

II

X883 There does not seem to be any fixed age at which children can claim admission to the dormitory; it depends mainly on their relations with their parents. When they reach the stage of going about with other children, forming gangs and playing with them instead of staying at home, there is a natural desire to go to the ghotul. The first entry is very informal, especially for boys, who simply slip in almost unnoticed with the rest. A girl does not go until 'she covers her shoulders'. This does not suggest that she is mature, but there comes a stage when she wants to wear a little more clothing than is usual in infancy, and this marks her entry into her ghotul phase. A girl usually asks her mother first, and often—we were told—the mother herself suggests it when the children are old enough for their presence to be an embarrassment in the home at night. Sometimes a girl is greatly attached to her mother—and the mother too may find her help necessary in looking after still younger children—and her coming to the ghotul is delayed. Then the older girls go and fetch her, saying to the mother, 'Your girl is now grown up; you must let her come, or you will be fined'.

In any case there is no taboo on even the youngest children going to the dormitory; a father may take his two-year-old son to sleep there when the mother is away at a wedding or in her catamenial period; smaller children often go to watch the games and dances. A boy's initiation is not like going to a new school; he knows all about it already.

But very little girls and boys are not allowed to sleep in the ghotul, 'for they sometimes wake up crying, and they wet their beds', so they are taken home after the games and dances are over. Before a child can sleep in the ghotul 'he must be able to look after himself'. At Deogaon, they said, 'We only let big girls sleep in the ghotul; what can the little ones do?' Konda, headman of Kanhargaon, recalled how his elder brother used to chase him out of the ghotul and beat him for coming before he was old enough.

When children first begin to attend the ghotul regularly, they are left alone for a week or so. Then the elder boys ask them if they are going to be regular in their attendance and why they did not come before. The children usually reply that their parents kept them away. Then the Sirdar says to a boy,

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'Now that you have begun to come to the ghotul, you must come every day. 883^x
You must bring one bit of wood every day. You must first salute me and then all the other chelik and you must do what they tell you to do.' To a girl he says, 'You must obey the Belosa and Dulosa, and clean the ghotul every day'.

A little boy must bring a *gik*-mat with him. This is usually made for him by his mother or an elder sister. But a girl is allowed to beg for a 'camping site' on someone else's mat.

The children are now called *nona* or *noni* till they get proper titles. They do not join the dances, unless they are being specially instructed; they generally play and sleep together. At bedtime they have to salute the full members with Johar. Every evening they must bring a bit of wood for the ghotul store. In some places they have to hand round the tobacco which nowadays takes the place of the ganja which was provided in Lingo's ghotul. When girls are few, the boy probationers massage the elder boys, but not as the girls do it—they massage the legs and thighs. Both boys and girls have to act as ghotul fags and are made to work hard enough. Old Sukali of Masora described how as a little girl, the Pioss of the ghotul, 'I used to carry little bundles for the others at dances and marriages. I was always ordered about by everyone'.

The older boys and girls take a lot of trouble over these children. They 883^x
teach them manners and to keep their mouths shut. They instruct them in
dancing and the ghotul games. They watch them closely and punish any 867
failure or slackness. They specially watch a child's regularity of attendance, and whether a boy brings his wood properly and the girl does her cleaning. Regularity, obedience and habits of work are taught and tested.

When a sufficient time has passed, and the leaders see that the children 883^x
have grasped the ghotul rules and customs, they decide to give them a title
at the next Dassera or Diwali. To the Muria these festivals are simply dates; 553
they do not observe them in a religious sense; and the date is nearly always wrong. In some ghotul, children are given names at any time of the year; in others, boys are named at Dassera and girls at Diwali; in others again, boys and girls are named together at Diwali. In some ghotul, in Pandripani, for example, and Bandopal, girls are given their titles at the menarchè. 'When a girl first puts water on her head, then we give her a name.' But this cannot be a general rule, for I have seen dozens of little girls with ghotul names.

Titles are given at a simple and pleasant ceremony. I was present at Sidhawand on 5 November 1940 at the naming of five children. At the beginning of the evening, the boys and girls assembled, each bringing a seer of parched rice. The Sirdar and Kotwar measured each contribution to see that the quantity was right, and then poured it onto a cloth spread on a mat in the middle of the ghotul compound. Presently the Belosa brought three leaf-cups and the Sirdar filled one for Lingo Pen, one 'for the Diwali' and one for the Village Mother and her consort. The rest of the rice was divided into four parts, for men, for women, for Kokameta (a neighbouring ghotul with which the Sidhawand ghotul was on very friendly terms) and for the boys and girls of Sidhawand. These last, it may be observed, only got a quarter of the feast.

This done, the Belosa and Dulosa held a formal consultation, came forward and called out three diminutive boys, Tuna, Gando and Dorga. They caught hold of each in turn, lifted him up, hit him twice and announced his name. To Tuna they gave the title Tel-dundi, to Gando the name Hardi-garbo and

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to Dorga the attractive title Chelik-sunder. Then the Sirdar called the leading boys aside and they whispered together for a few minutes. The Sirdar went to the group of girls, picked up two of them and brought them into the middle of the company. He lifted each in turn and hit her with his clenched fist. To the first, Sukmi, he gave the name Jankai and to the second, Pakli, the name Mankai. This was all done, as it should be done, in the presence of the people, in the face of the village elders, who yet by an absurd fiction are not supposed to know that such a thing as a ghotul name exists.

The motiari now did Johar, first to the Sirdar, then to all the chelik and elders and visitors, but not to any women. Then the Sirdar, followed by the three boy initiates, did the same. This is the only occasion when the Sirdar salutes his 'subjects'—it is a kind action, to make the little boys feel at home. It is the last time the initiates perform the Johar rite. After the Johar, the Sirdar gave a little sermon to the new boys. He waved a siari stalk round them three times and said, 'Bear this *kāwar* [pole for carrying loads]. Serve the [ghotul] government. Give food to the official and the stranger. Serve and feed your father and mother. Now you have a new name. Grow up quickly and live till you are an old man.' He put rice-marks on their foreheads and gave them a leaf-cup of liquor. In Aturgaon, the leader gives the initiates a ring, but this was not done here.

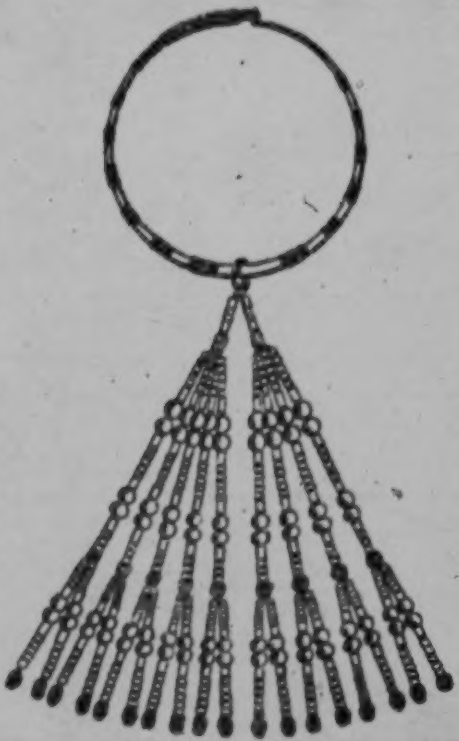

FIG. 65. Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads
Actual size

In many villages, when he gets his name, the initiate gives a bottle of liquor to the ghotul, of which he then becomes a full member. He is then excused the tiresome duties of childhood. He no longer has to bring wood daily: he no longer salutes anyone. But in some places, the little boy has to continue doing this even *after* he has got his title until he is 'grown up' and makes a formal offering of liquor to the ghotul. For a girl, a title means less change, for she still has to salute the boys every night and perform her obligations in tobacco, leaves and cleaning. But boys and girls alike gain a new dignity, and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names. 883x 553

III

In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made. 883x 554

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. [152] Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently: at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathizes in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organize the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

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in 1940-1 were the Salya of Binjhli, the Sirdar of Sidhawand and Malakot, the Hikmi of Almer, the Likhen of Kanhargaon, the Kotwar of Kabonga.

When the old leader, the Sirdar, decides finally to lay down his office, there is a small ceremony for the appointment of his successor. The following is the custom in villages of the Chalka Pargana. The old Sirdar, after giving due notice to the elders of the village and the ghotul members, comes on an appointed day wearing a new turban which he has bought himself, five to eight hands long. The ghotul members collect money in the village and purchase liquor. When everyone has assembled in the ghotul, the elders ask the members, 'Whom do you want for Sirdar?' They give the name of the boy they want and the elders remove the turban from the old Sirdar and tie it round the head of his successor, saying, 'From today the ghotul is in your hands. Whatever you command must be done'. The members reply, 'We will do whatever he says'. Then the elders say, 'Look, boy, these children are in your care. If you take them to another village, yours is the responsibility. When they are sleeping, look to see that every child is there. You may go hungry, but don't let the children starve. When there is a marriage, you must arrange the work. When anyone dies, you must see to it. When a visitor comes, you must arrange wood and water. See that the ghotul is always clean and the children are also clean. For if they are happy, it is your credit; if they are ruined, it is your fault.' At this point, in some villages, the girls present the new Sirdar with a new sleeping-mat; in Binjhli, they give him three rings, which he wears throughout his time of office and returns when he resigns; in Markabera, they give him a leaf-pipe of honour. Finally the girls formally give him his new name, hitting him on the back with clenched fists, and his 'subjects' salute him with Johar and place *tika*-marks of rice on his forehead. They give him liquor to drink, and celebrate his appointment with a dance.

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In Khutgaon village, I found that the turban ceremony had been abandoned. Some years ago a dog urinated on it. This was regarded as a very bad omen, and when the Siraha was consulted he declared that they must no more tie the turban on the leader's head nor must the motiari any longer touch the heads of the boys with their combs. The disappearance of old customs is not always due to alien influence.

On 1 November 1941 I was present at Bhanpuri when a new Diwan (as the head of the ghotul is called there) was appointed. The girls and boys assembled shortly after nine for what was called the *Diwali mark*, or eating of parched rice in honour of the Diwali festival. Each member had to bring a contribution to the feast: big boys and girls brought one seer each, somewhat younger children brought half a seer and the little probationers a quarter. The rice was collected on mats spread on the ground in the compound and carefully measured. Part was put aside for the villagers—in fact for the children's own parents; part was allocated to a neighbouring village with whom the ghotul was on friendly terms; the rest was for the present company.

Then the elder boys retired inside the ghotul and deliberated about the appointment of their new Diwan. This was only a formality, since the matter had been settled long before. They came out and declared that they had chosen Gando the Sirkil. The Belosa and Dulosa, the two leading girls, then went to Gando, pulled him to his feet and thumped him hard on the back crying 'Diwan Diwan'. After the Belosa had put a ring on his finger, he went round and saluted everyone with Johar. After a few days he would, he promised, treat them to eight annas' worth of liquor.

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After this the parched rice was distributed, and the youngsters played uproarious games, while the village elders gave the new Diwan a little sermon which nobody could hear for the noise. Yet it was obviously a great occasion in Gando's life, and both he and the village elders took it seriously enough.

Indeed after fifty years Bindo looks back to his appointment as the Silledar or head of the Benur ghotul as one of the top moments of his life. He claims that his character and virtues were so outstanding that he was elected leader at once, when he was only ten years old, even before he had been initiated. It is impossible to verify it, but that is his story.

> After I had been a year in the ghotul all the boys and girls were delighted with me. At Diwali time, the village elders came to the ghotul to make a new leader. The Pargana Manjhi asked the chelik, 'Which of you boys is the most intelligent and honest? Which of you is fit to be your leader?' The chelik at once replied, 'There is only one boy: Bindo must be our Raja'. At that the elders turned to me and said, 'You are the Raja of this ghotul. Care for it well. Do not let its affairs go outside. If anyone does wrong you may punish them. When visitors come to the village, see to their needs. If labourers are needed, supply them. When there is a marriage or a funeral, send the boys and girls for work.'
>
> My name was then changed from Bindo to Silledar. The Gaita put a ring on my finger and said to the chelik and motiari, 'Now Silledar has become your Raja. Obey him in all things, submit to his punishments. Work hard and keep the ghotul clean. Keep free of scandal; the honour of the village is in your hands'.
>
> Then parched rice was distributed and when the elders had drunk their liquor they went home.

After the actual head of the ghotul, a very important appointment is that of the Kotwar, as he is called in most villages, who has the duty of looking after the motiari. This boy is in some ways the executive officer of the ghotul. Since a great deal of the actual work of the dormitory is done by girls and as the arrangements to be made for them are far more complicated and difficult than for the boys, the Kotwar is a person of the greatest influence and importance.

In consultation with the Belosa, he arranges in those ghotul which change their partners how the boys and girls are to be paired off. This fact alone gives his position great significance. Again, in consultation with the Belosa, he allocates duties to the girls at marriages, dances and festivals. If the motiari do not obey him he has the power of punishing them. It is said that first he refuses to accept a girl's Johar and for a time, however much she may try to please him, he refuses to speak to her. If she continues disobeying him he may fine her or give her some other small punishment; but if the offence is a serious one he has to report the matter to the Sirdar in the usual way.

The Kotwar not only punishes the girls but he himself is often punished on their behalf. He is responsible for them and if they fail to clean the ghotul or perform their social duties, it is regarded as his own fault and he is penalized.

Sometimes the Kotwar is appointed on the same day as the Sirdar or Diwan. When this is done the Belosa puts a ring on the Sirdar's finger and her assistant, the Dulosa, gives another to the Kotwar.

883 In some places there is a boy called Pargana Manjhi who exercises the same functions as that official actually does in the life of the tribe. Normally, however, appeals against the decisions of the ghotul leaders go to some older man who has retained his association with the ghotul for that very purpose.

The girl leader is generally appointed by the older boys in consultation with the Kotwar and the motiari. This is an entirely informal matter, there is no election, there is rarely a dispute. In some places the ghotul 'wife' of the leading boy becomes the head of the girls, especially in those ghotul where the girls' names are the same as those of the boys. Thus, where the Diwan is the head of the boys the Diwanin will lead the girls. In those villages where the Gaita's son has the right to leadership of the boys, the Gaita's daughter has a similar privilege among the girls.

The actual ceremony of appointment of a Belosa is similar to that of a Sirdar or Diwan but omits, of course, the tying of a turban. The elders say to the girl, 'Greet the boys with Johar, give them tobacco, comb their hair, massage their limbs, keep the ghotul clean, look after the younger girls, see there is no scandal; this is your responsibility and charge'.

IV

883
554 In some villages, specially in those of the north-west (in the Kalpatti-Bandadesh and Paralkot-Kalpatti Parganas) there is a rule that the son of the village Gaita must be the head of the ghotul. Thus in Koilibera and Barkot I found that the Gaita's son ranked, even when he was a little boy, above the son of the Pargana Manjhi and this boy or some other relative of the Gaita was always the head of the ghotul. In Sarandi the son of the Dhurwa and in Padbera the son of the Manjhi were the leaders of their ghotul. The head of the Barkot ghotul was called Gaita and was the Gaita's son. The head of the Mannegaon ghotul was also called Gaita and the post was held by the son of Kandru, the Gaita of that village. In a Ghotul Pata recorded at Markabera, the village Gaita's son is leader of the chelik and the Gaita's daughter leader of the motiari.

883
183 But in other villages throughout the whole Muria area such an idea is unheard of and, when I have suggested it, has been indignantly rejected. The only leadership is that of character; the whole principle of the ghotul, I have been told again and again, is that everyone is equal, rich or poor, the son of priest, headman or landlord, all are one in this fellowship which knows no wealth-distinction or privilege of inherited rank. And this, I think, is true. The Muria belief in equality is often carried to quite fantastic lengths. If work is demanded from a village by the Government, every family contributes the same amount. If in any ghotul all the boys have titles and there are thus no probationers to bring wood in the evenings, all the boys go together to fetch wood in a cart; each cuts exactly the same quantity and all bring the wood home. If one boy is not able to be present, they postpone the task till another day. If the village gets any present it must be exactly distributed and at feasts exact measurements are made of parched rice, meat or liquor. The Muria of Chandabera said that 'if one of our tribe were to pile up heaps of gold before us, we would still say "O, he is only a relation; our sons can marry his daughters",' and in Phunder the headman said, 'Of all the good things our children learn in the ghotul, one of the best is that everyone is equal'. In Phulpar, the leader was the son of the Atpariha or village drudge. At Chandabera, the Kotwar was deformed; at Bhanpuri, the Daroga was blind. Both had important duties and every privilege.

Plate LXXI

352
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301

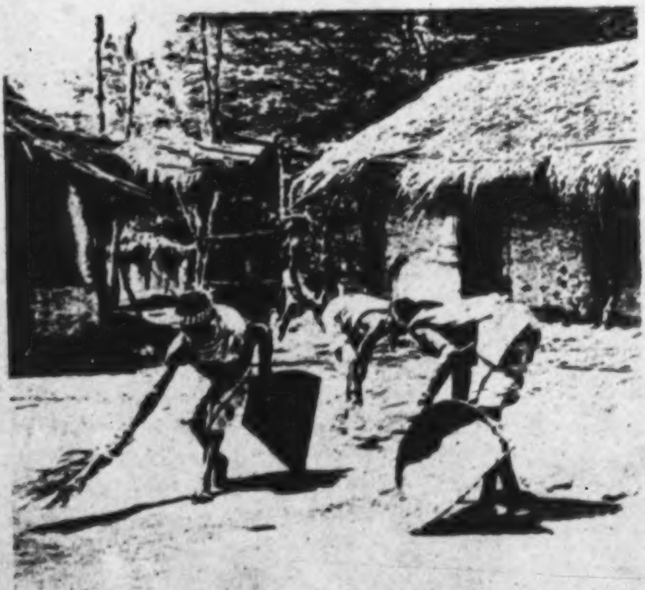
Chelik of Toinar with his ghotul 'wife'

142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356



Motiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

x883 829 The Muria belief in equality is illustrated by a characteristic story. 'Raja Dokara ruled in Tulsidongri. It was thick jungle: there was no Brahmin to cook his food. So he went to Bhagavan to ask for one.' Bhagavan said, "Certainly take one if you can recognize him. They all look alike to me". Bhagavan told everyone to wear a dhoti, and when they came, Brahmin and Ganda, Muria and Dhakar, Halba and Maria, the Raja found it impossible to tell which was which. So he sent Idur Kola Pen to see what he could do, but he also failed. At last a fly came and said, "Give me something to eat, and I'll get you a Brahmin". Idur Kola Pen offered it gold and silver and many tax-free villages. "No", said the fly, "I don't want these. There's a sore on your leg. Let me sit and feed there." Idur Kola Pen allowed it, and when it had fed, the fly settled on a Brahmin's head. Thus the man was recognized and he became Raja Dokara's cook.'

x883 554 This conception of complete democracy affects the position of the leaders. Their power is not absolute; they can be, and sometimes are, removed from office. They can be punished by a meeting of the other members. At Palari, the three leaders—Diwan, Tahsildar and Jamadar—abused their position, and the boys and girls met and fined them. In any case, the rule of the ghotul is not that of a dictator, but of a council. Associated with the chief boy or girl is a company of two or three who advise them on all important matters.

These leaders do, of course, have their privileges. The little boys fag for them and massage them if the girls are absent. Little girls do the Belosa's hair and run her errands. In ghotul where partners have to be constantly changed, the leaders are sometimes allowed to have girls of their own. In Banjora, for example, the Kotwar, who is there the leader, and the Belosa always sleep together, though the others must change every two or three days.

V

x883 563 Are members of other tribes and the Hindu castes admitted to the ghotul? This is the sort of question that is usually met with an indignant denial from the Muria elders, who explain that they never admit outsiders for fear of possible matrimonial complications, and equally indignant denials from Hindus and others who claim that the ghotul is a degraded institution to which they would never send their children. Neither is true.

Throughout the Muria area may be found examples—not many examples, but some—of Muria-Lohar, Rawat, Nahar and even the despised Ganda and Ghasia being admitted as members of the dormitory. Such children receive titles; they are allotted duties and allowed all ghotul privileges. In Palli Barkot the people said that Muria-Lohar boys and girls were given the fullest privileges but that there was a ban on Mahara, Rawat and Kuruk. The Lohar children could sleep with the Muria children, but must not marry them. In Nayanar I discovered to my astonishment that two of the girls who were taking the leading part at a Muria wedding were Lohar—the Alosa and Dulosa of the ghotul. In Markabera, the most popular girl in the entire company, the Saile who had a Muria ghotul-partner, was a Lohar. The Belosa of the Mule ghotul was a Lohar, so was the Salya; in 1941 the Jamadar of Kokori, the Jamadar of Phunder, the Jalaru (a girl) of Phunder, the Jhoria of Modenga were all Lohar.

The leading drummer of Hatipakna was a Nahar and two of his brothers and a sister were also prominent members of the ghotul. At Junganar a Ganda boy was made the Suel, and a Ghasia was the Kotwar at Modenga. In Phunder there was a Kalar boy. Rawat are commonly admitted.

x 883 563 Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

x 883 The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

563 539

Jāging poysi weke dāda roy seng busur bhusbās ?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda ?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Naua gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayakāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le ?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori hile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uiti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

x 883 574 431 Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Sidhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again. 883x 578

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night. 883x 574

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atargaon points the moral. 883x 574 539

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

x 883 574 539 She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

x 883 591 A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mâhua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

x 883 582 Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj halau, larha larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

883x

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young. 582

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'. 883x 591

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval. 883x 837 684

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted. 883x 837

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums 883x 626

X 883 When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a
room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic,
626 they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that
the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently
hardened to persist in their visits after this.

X But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by
883 them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things
are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari
837 occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1942 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

X883 There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys
are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul
591 until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul
and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul,
768 Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and
resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come
589 regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

X883 The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

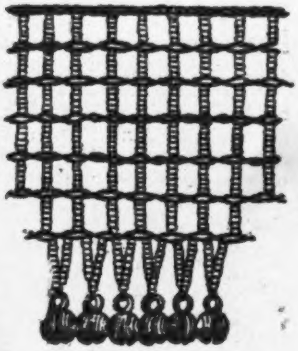
X883 But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the
Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she
578 said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

THE ghotul is very literally a night-club; it is only in the evening that there is 'a noise in the belly of the elephant'; during the day, except on festivals, it is deserted. The real life of the ghotul is in the firelight. 883x 517

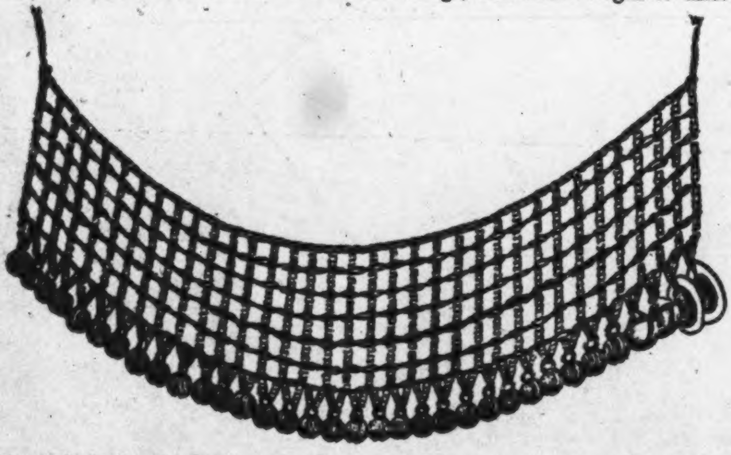
The conventions and routine of a ghotul evening are almost everywhere the same. I have spent a hundred evenings in all parts of the Muria area with the chelik and motiari and have found, on the whole, a remarkable similarity of custom. The Muria explain this by saying that all ghotul have developed from the first house at Semurgaon where Lingo himself prescribed the routine that should be followed.



[301]

In the afternoon, motiari come to sweep, clean and cow-dung the buildings and courtyard. Their grass brooms are soon raising clouds of dust; rubbish is collected in basket or winnowing-fan and thrown away; cow-dung mixed with water is spread by hand over the floor. At sunset, someone often comes to arrange and light the fire; where there are no matches to light your pipe or lanterns to show you your way about, a fire serves more purposes than warmth and is needed even in the hot weather.

At any time after supper, it may be from 7.30 up to 9 p.m. according to the season and the circumstances of the village, the chelik begin to arrive.



[301]

FIG. 66. Bead belt with bells and cowries from Remawand. The beads are blue and white

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and [516] girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone.

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

[533] Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married.

Songs

x883
539

I

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la

Korha ta doyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra kiyāhān dāda silledār ?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mehwāl kopāl lewa bāra kiyāhān ?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra kiyāhān dāda silledār ?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta kor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

883x
539

Tāna bāra hiyāhān dāda silledār ?	Why should I take out the hen, O brother Silledar?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Sanduk ta rupiya oiki helo tiloka ?	Will you take the rupee from the box?
Tāna nana bāra kiyāhān dada silledar ?	Why should I take the rupee from the box, O brother Silledar?
Jhāpi ta chocho oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, will you take the cloth hidden in the basket?
Tāna nana oihān dāda silledār !	Yes, brother Silledar, I will take the cloth hidden in the basket, O brother Silledar!

2

This song is from Manegaon and has the refrain *Suy ale helo le.*

Pūt paroda pālor podela.	On the ant-hill grows a *kurai* tree.
Bag ne pungār puyta injore.	The flower has blossomed, sister.
Bor dādān mihchi oye rāt ?	Who are you going to give the flower to, sister?
Laharu dādān mihchi oye rāt.	I will pin the flower on Laharu.
Tirka kāya tāla injore ;	That boy's head is like the *tirka* fruit;
Bese pungār pāga injore ;	His turban is like the *kewu* flower;
Pāgāt pungār mihchi hiyāhāt,	I will pin the flower on his turban,
Udimy mud-ka mamāt hiyāhāt,	I will give him a blow with my fist,
Durro poy-nai mamāt bitkat.	And quickly I will run away.

3

Barpela Post Oyna Pata

This song, with its refrain, *He dāda saidar*, addressed to the head of the ghotul, is called 'The Song of Carrying off by Force'.

Barang sarpār te udītom saidar ?	Why are you sitting in the middle of the road, Saidar?
Badonke ise udītom ?	Whom are you waiting for, Saidar?
Alosānk ise udītom.	You are waiting for Alosa, Saidar.
Kaido arka poysi hatke ise handu.	She went with her pot for water, Saidar.
Talāt kumār kishum hatke ise handu.	She had a roll on her head, Saidar.
Sarpār tāhe handu.	She came along the road, Saidar.
Tāne ise poyandi.	You caught hold of her, Saidar.
Ayo ayo indu.	She said, 'No, no', Saidar.
Tuda tāne ondi saidar.	You dragged her to the jungle, Saidar.

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After an hour or two of dancing, singing, games or story-telling, certainly not much after ten o'clock, the serious business of the evening begins. The younger boys, those who have not yet been given titles or excused their tribute of wood, go round to every senior boy beginning with the leader (but not afterwards following any special order) saluting each with Johar followed by the ghotul title—'Johar Sirdar', 'Johar Kotwar', 'Johar Silledar'. But for greeting relatives, the term of relationship is used—'Johar *dāda*'. 'Johar

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māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

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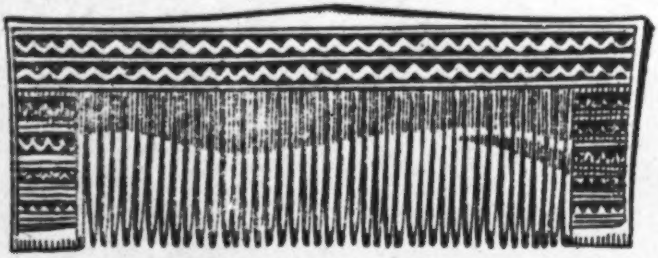

FIG. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

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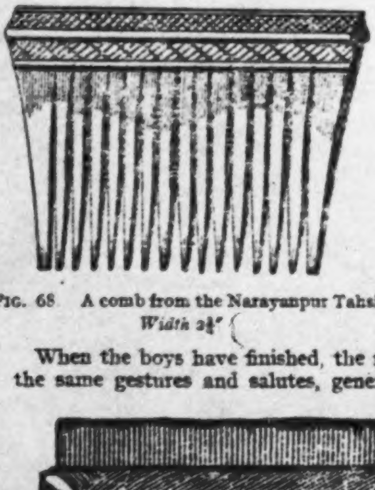

FIG. 68 A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¾"

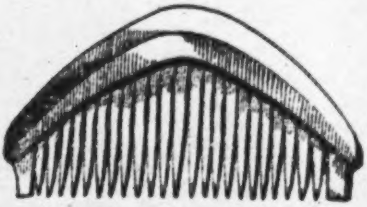

FIG. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3⅛"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

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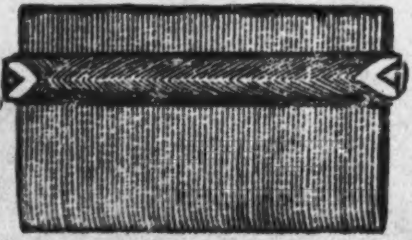

FIG. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2⅛"

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FIG. 71. The *pusal koji* or cat's footprint necklace. The beads in the centre are white and red and the cat's footprint itself is made of white, blue and yellow beads. The rest of the necklace is composed of a number of beads, orange, brown, pink, mauve, green and scarlet
Length 15"

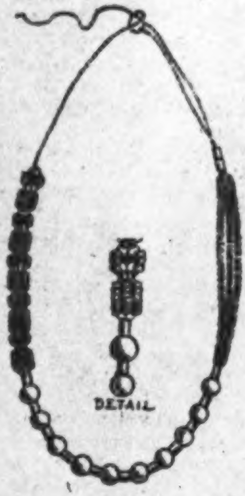


FIG. 72. The *hupe koji* or rat's footprint necklace of blue and white beads
Length 31"

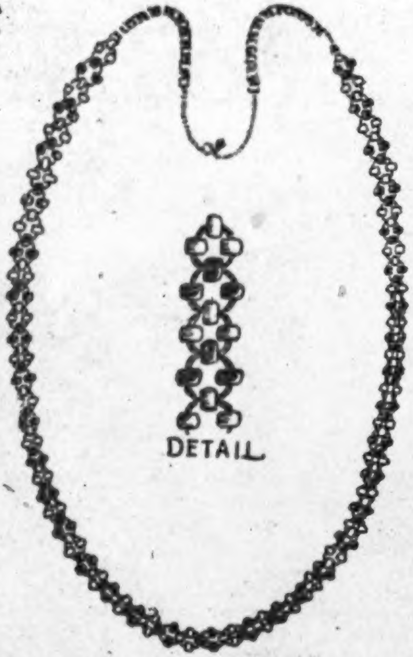
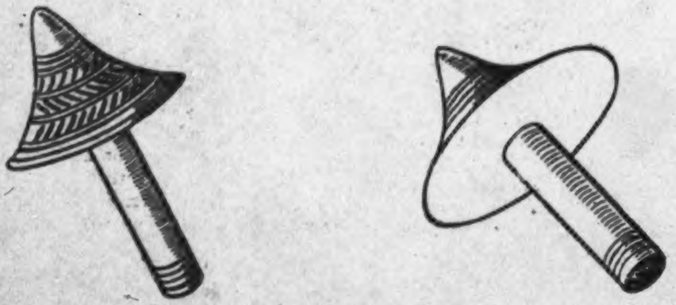


FIG. 73. Carved wooden ear-plugs from Kanhargaon



X 883 517 then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *masni*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Masni-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

[376] Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

X 883 513 302 The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

X 883 302 [515] The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis kiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

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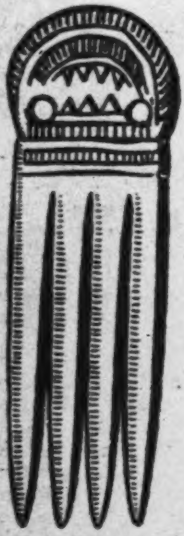


FIG. 74. Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills
Length 3⅜"

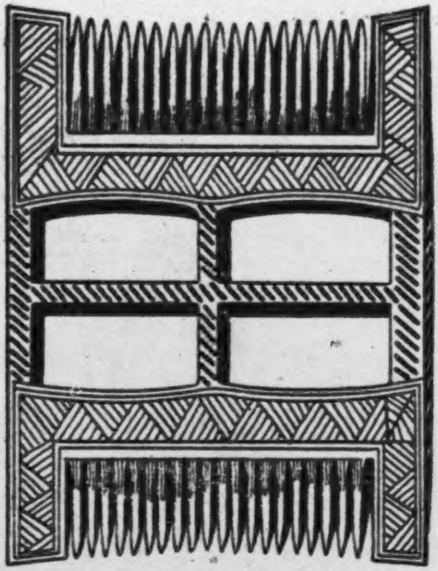
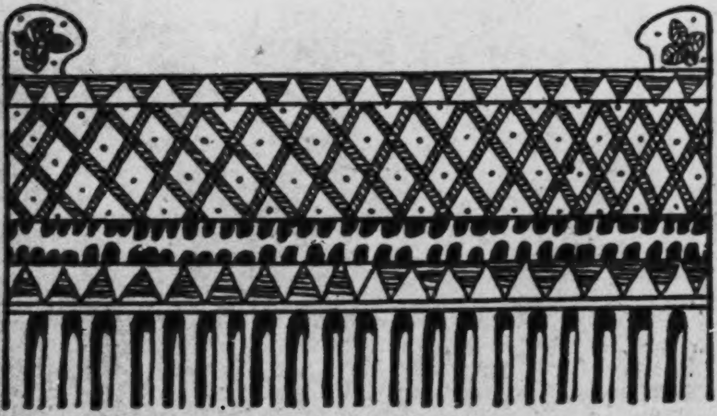


FIG. 75. Double comb from Bhanpuri
Height 4⅜"



From Paul Schebesta's article 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula' in *JRAS* (1929), p. 758
FIG. 76. Malayan comb
(*See p. 388n*)

X883 302 then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon, the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

X883 513 It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

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each other's arms on the sleeping-mats. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

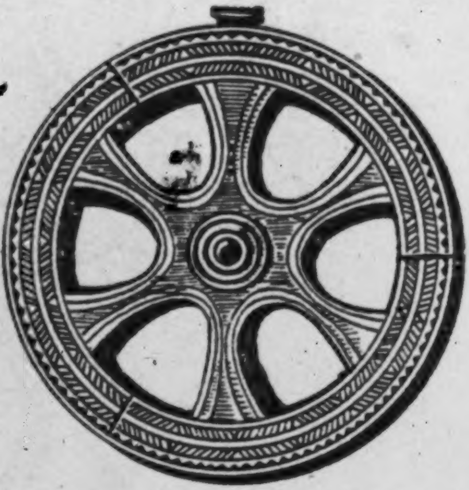

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

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In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

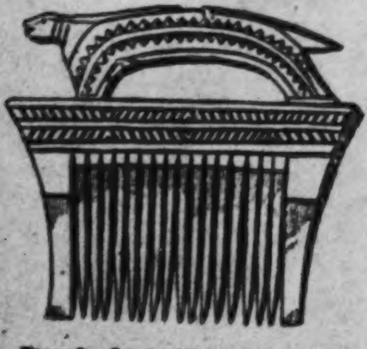

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

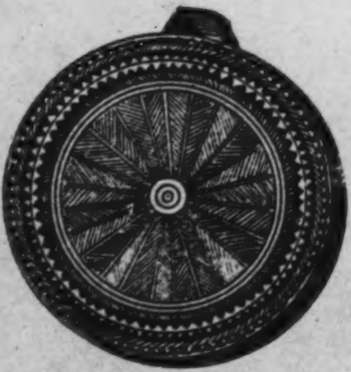

FIG. 79. The *kamal-gola* or tortoise box
Height 4"

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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When visitors come to the village, the girls usually do not go to the ghotul at all. In Karikhodra the chelik complained bitterly about the disruption of ghotul life that was caused by the continual presence of subordinate officials and merchants. During the busy seasons of the year the ghotul is practically closed, specially at the time when everyone is needed to sleep in the fields to guard the ripening crops. When the boys are in the fields, the girls often camp on the verandah of someone's house where they play, dance and sleep. During a marriage, also, the ghotul is normally closed and in some villages there is a rule that the members must sleep in their camp and not in the dormitory so long as the ceremony continues.

In the very early morning, the Belosa gets up and goes round the ghotul rousing her girls. They ought to be out of the ghotul before dawn. 'They leave early', said a boy in Markabera, 'because they come laughing from the arms of the chelik and feel shy about it.' I am told that in Kondagaon the girls remain later, until it is light, but in Narayanpur they leave at cock-crow. 'A girl should be hard at work husking or grinding grain before her parents are up.' The boys get up later, but it is considered improper for them to be seen sleeping in the ghotul after the village is up and about. Soon after the girls have gone, they too are up and, taking their mats with them, return to their houses and the duties of the day.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. DRESS AND FASHIONS

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste. 883 x 291 301

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag. 291 [884]

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.' [524]

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

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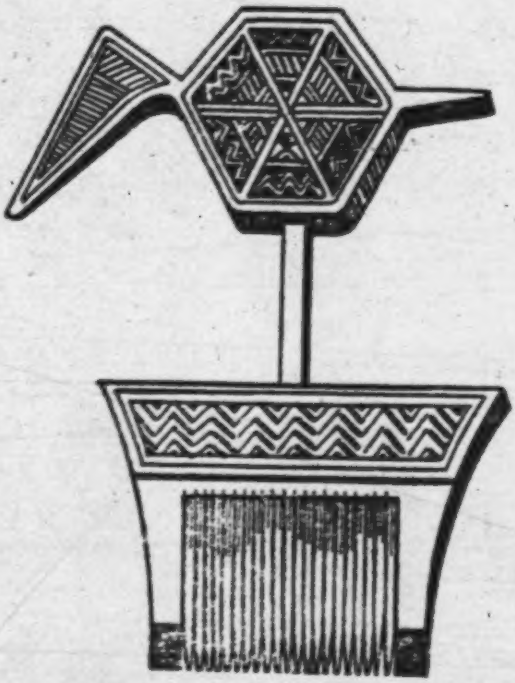

FIG. 80. Bird-comb from Chandabera
Height 4⅛″

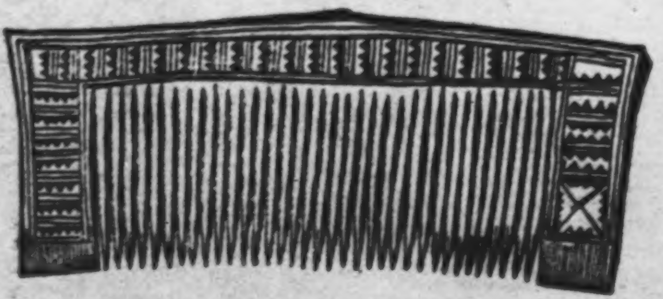

FIG. 81. Comb from Bhorpal
Length 3⅛″

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply 301 cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *hawel* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central 439 India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business.

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different 301 fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria.

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the [304] beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy.

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little overdressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhār*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hinwa* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of [585] the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god.

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *kardan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

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[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

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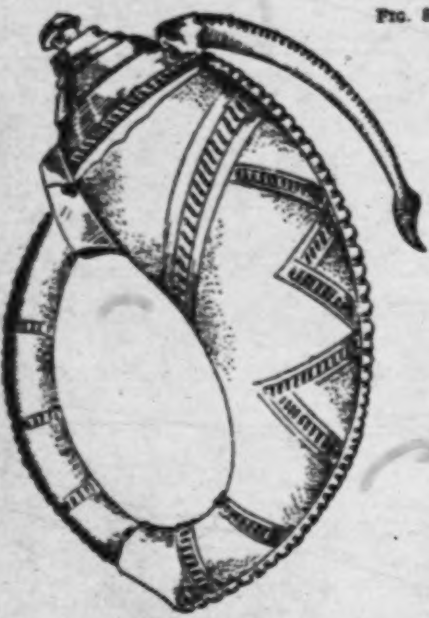


FIG. 82. Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana
Height 5"

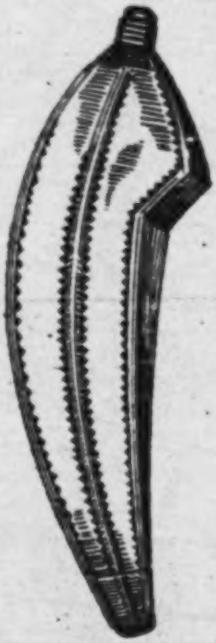


FIG. 83. *Kalari-gota* from Borpal
Height 7½"

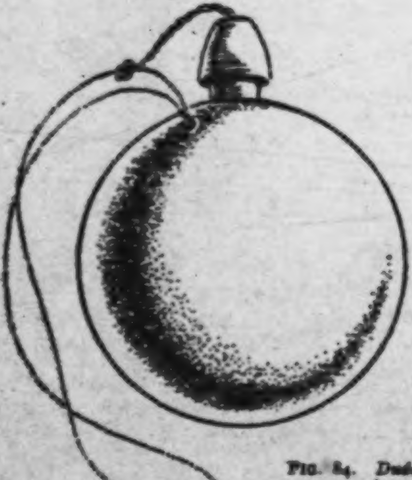


FIG. 84. *Dudong-gota.* A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'
Height 1½"

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In the north-west, in the villages of the remote Partabpur and Paralkot areas, where Hill Maria influence is still strong, the chelik of the Paralkot area distinguished two types of necklace: the cat's foot pattern and the rat's foot. (Compare Figs. 71 and 72.) Some of the motiari here wore necklaces usually characteristic of the Hill Maria, with large white beads, and little bells at the end. I have seen motiari with both breasts exposed in Maria fashion, though others have been very fully dressed in smart red saris. Head-bands are not worn, but boys and girls stick flowers and feathers in their hair. The girls usually have few combs. 301 291 301

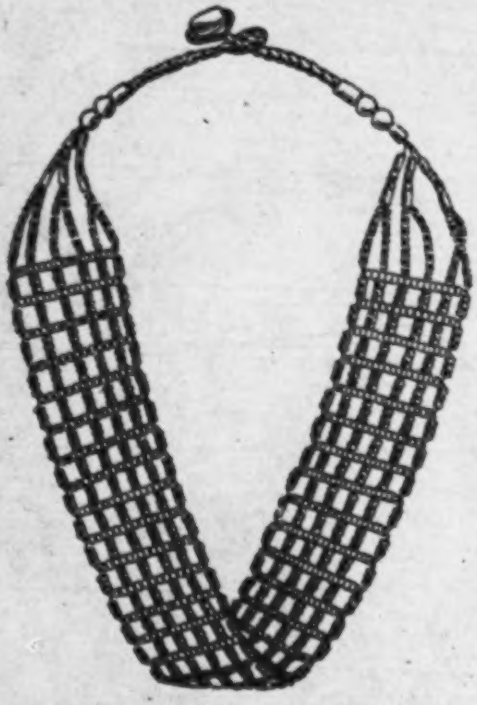


Fig. 85. Jhoria head-band of red, blue and white beads

One may still see necklaces and head-bands of fibre, either sago or date palm, carefully made (Figs. 87 and 88). 301 291

To move north from the Jhoria country is to receive an unforgettable impression of drabness. The bright head-bands disappear: the smart tight bead-collars yield to floppy monotonous necklaces. The beads are big, cheap and red; almost everything is bazaar-purchased. One particularly misses the girls' decorations. The Kalpatti, Surebahi, Antagarh and Amabera are the least colourful of all the ghotul parganas. Contact with Chhattisgarhi Gond has ruined their taste and destroyed their artistic enterprise.

Round Kondagaon and along the main road, the chelik and motiari have 301 a charm of their own, though there is little in their dress or ornament to emphasize it. Both wear a great many necklaces, of red and white beads, getting the effect from quantity rather than from anything artistic in the design. They distinguish the *gīr-gatti*, a necklace of small black beads, *moti-māla*, made of white beads, *jug-jugi*, of red and white beads, *jīt-mungiya*, of red beads, *fen-ossie*, a decorated neck-band and *hīri*, a thin black necklace.

Occasionally you will see a solitary head-band; girls often have masses of combs.

In the ears, the motiari wear cheap yellow *kisma* from the bazaar, or *dhār* shields. The boys have little brass rings in the helix.

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 832 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render 302 515 524 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

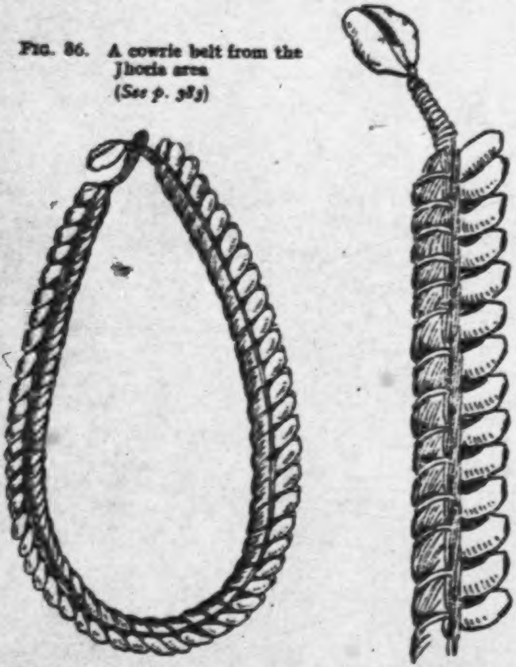
Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar koto*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round 302 301

FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(*See p. 383*)



[291]

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyāri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows. [524]

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 92) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

302 The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory
of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrāte pungār puy ānia

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

X 883
412 In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important
301 part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the
boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

412 Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I
believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical
531 significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does
171 not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos
301 of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a
theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs
[831] seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic
symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

431 For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean
836 that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

---

412
X 883 [1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The bearers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'
301 [2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that, this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poetry* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—ibid., Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

Plate LXXVII

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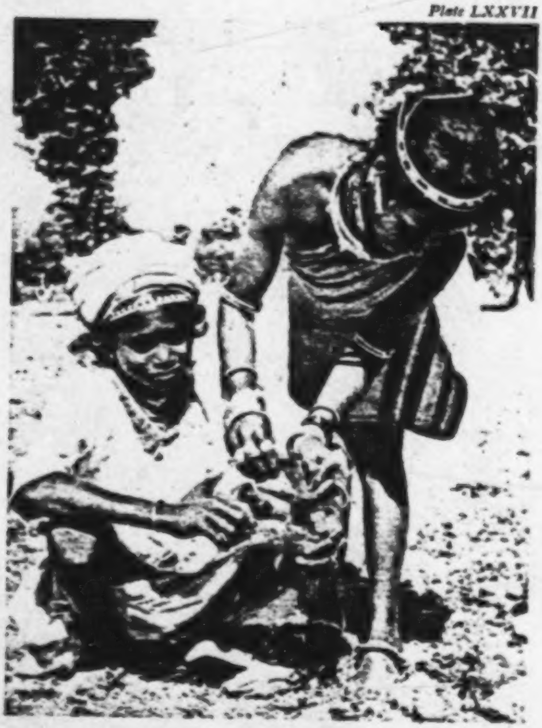
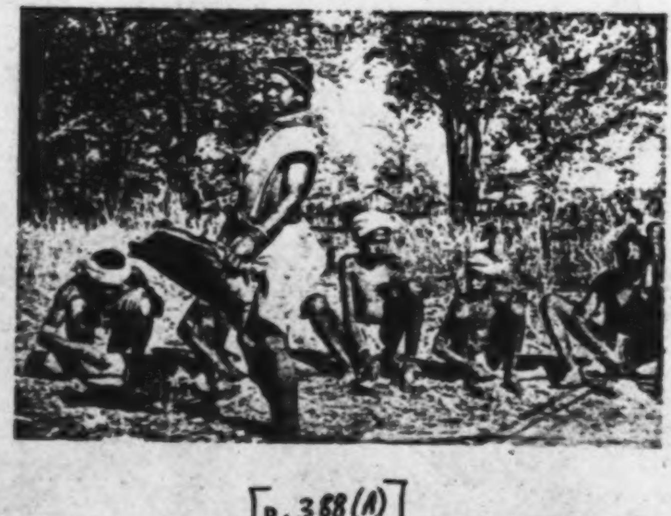


At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik



Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar

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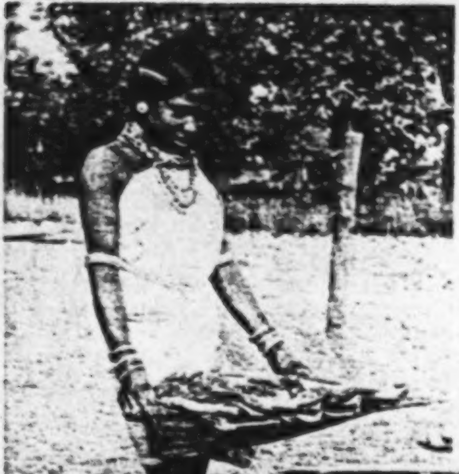
Plate LXXVIII



A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

[381]

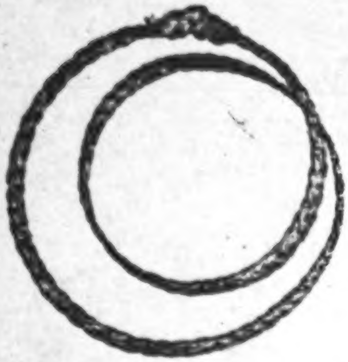


Fig. 87. Head-band of sago palm fibre from Malakot (*see p. 385*)
Length 23"

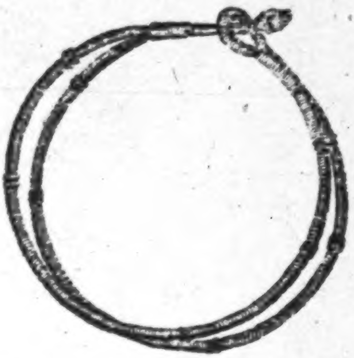


Fig. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (*see p. 385*)
Length 16"

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devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

[301]

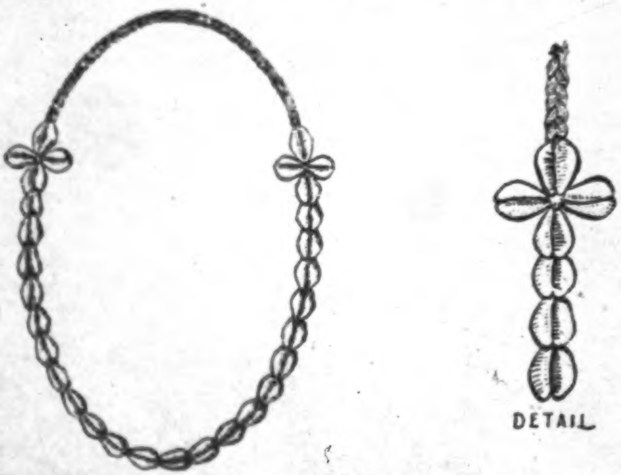


Fig. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(*See p. 386*)

431 night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present.
She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have
836 brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know
how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well,
412 what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning
301 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

X883 If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise
his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it,
303 he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

301 Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

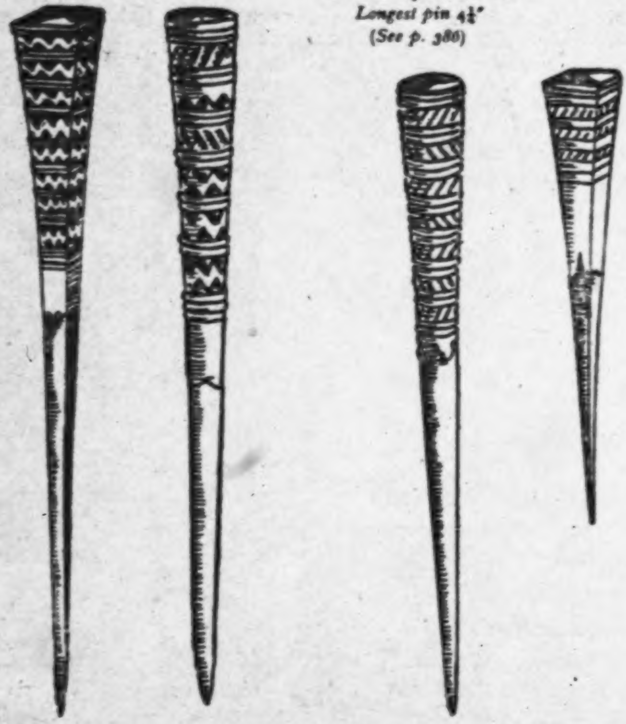
The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1½" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky,
[314] milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught
some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody. 412 784 301

FIG. 90 Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area *Longest pin 4½"* (*See p. 380*)



[301]

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1] 412 301

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently, 515 bathe daily, and keep their hair in beautiful condition. They have to—they are always on duty.

---

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Perry, op. cit., p. 34.

Both boys and girls bathe naked. A party of motiari goes to a stream, and when they are sure they are alone, they remove their little wraps and plunge into the water. They rub their limbs and bodies with mud, shake out their hair, rub in handfuls of mud, rinse it again and again. They have nothing corresponding to towels, so they sit in the sun to dry.

If, however, they have to bathe in some more public place such as a well or tank, they first wash legs, arms and face. Then the girl removes the upper covering of her body and tucks it between her legs or wraps it round her waist, and washes back and breasts in a way that does not wet her cloth.

Chelik usually bathe naked, even when there are other people about.

For washing at home, there are often hollowed-out trunks set up on a couple of supports with a run-away out through the wall of the house to some favourite tree such as a sago palm. A wife pours water over her husband's hands and feet, and often over his whole body. A common method of washing is to fill a long-handled gourd with water, tuck it under the chin and tip out the water over the hands which are thus free to be rubbed together.

There are gaps in the general tradition of cleanliness. No one seems to think it necessary to bathe after sexual intercourse. For the chelik and motiari this would, of course, compel them to admit that they had had it. The following lines are sarcastic: they are a fragment of a taunt song used during a marriage.

> Your son is bathing in water,
> At the hour of Raja Karan.[1]
> Your daughter is bathing in water,
> When intercourse is over.

The Muria do not usually wash their hands before food, though they do sometimes. They do not wash after defecation. Old women are often very dirty, as well they might be considering the hard toil that is put upon them. It takes time to go down to a stream to bathe; it needs strength and energy to bring water for a bath; an old widow rarely has either. And so we have many sayings from unsympathetic neighbours scorning these poor and simple people. 'A Muria woman never husks more rice than for a single meal and never covers her bottom which is always thick with dirt.' 'A Muria may be rich as a Raja, but he will always be dirty as a pig.'

Such dirt as there is may usually be traced to poverty, a poverty not infrequently due to the exactions and exploitation of the Muria's critics. It is true that both men and women dirty their buttocks by sitting on the ground—they tuck up their scanty clothes to save them from being worn out. So too if the cloth is dirty, it is because frequent washing will shorten its life—and then who will provide another? The well-to-do Indian or European critic, with servants to bring him water for his hands before a meal, does not always remember that when you have to bring water from a distant stream with your own hands, you tend to use it with more economy.

Yet in spite of poverty, in spite of a generally indifferent water-supply, in spite of a complete lack of toilet accessories (how many English women would keep as smart and fresh as a motiari without one of those aids to nature on which they so greatly rely?), the Muria keep themselves and their houses clean and pleasant enough.

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[1] Raja Karan is a legendary king who had a passion for cleanliness.

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

356

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

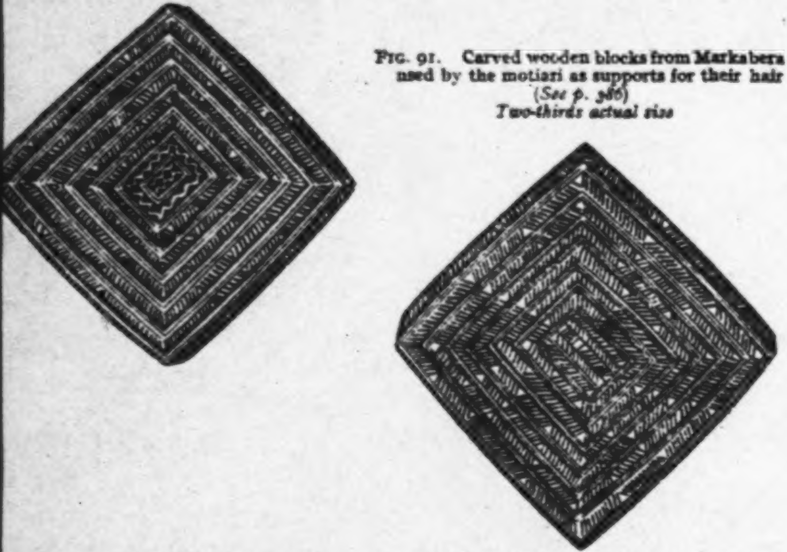

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(*See p. 386*)
Two-thirds actual size

[301
531]

296
[301]
[824]

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

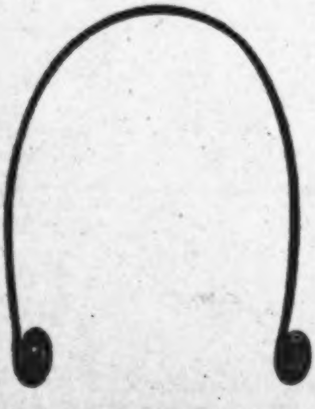

FIG. 90. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(*See p. 387*)

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not [824] use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls [524] stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 ×883 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *suria*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *suria*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

---

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon *dhumkuria* I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga *morung* which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

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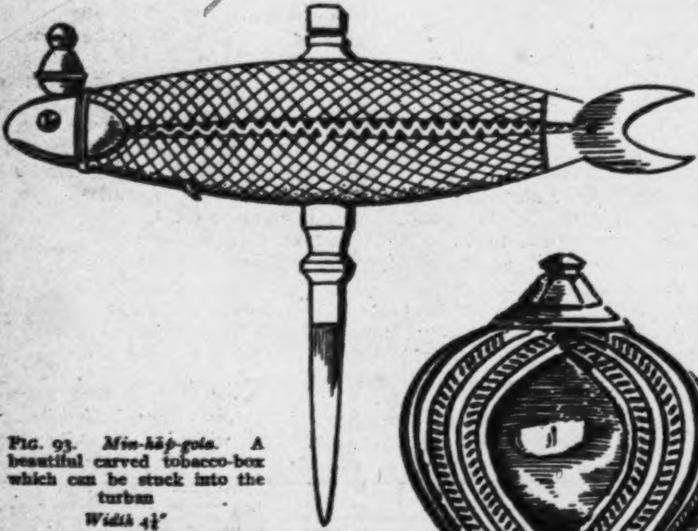


FIG. 93. *Min-hāp-gota.* A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban
Width 4⅜"

[831]

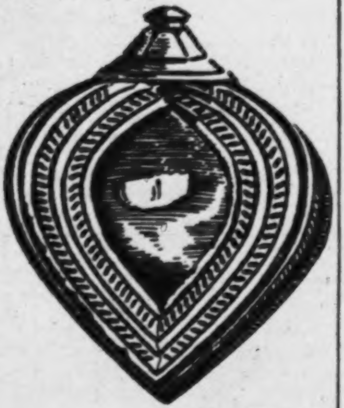


FIG. 94. *Pude-gota,* with an obvious representation of the vagina
Height 3⅛"

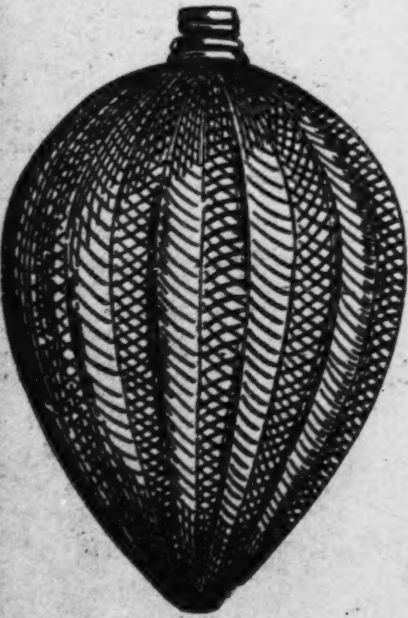


FIG. 95. Tobacco-box from Penjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *min* fish
Height 4⅝"

276 pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and
x 883 when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or
hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul.
276 Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes
with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch.
531 These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *halāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hāp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girne* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver
decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the
[831] *pudo-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved
on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble
the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

249 The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

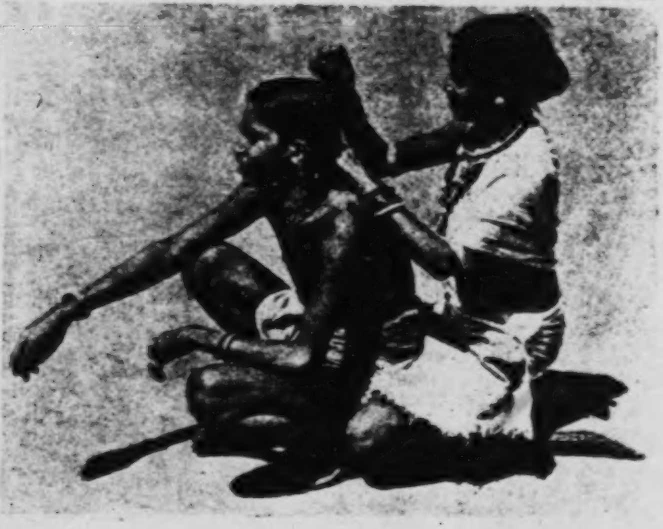
x883

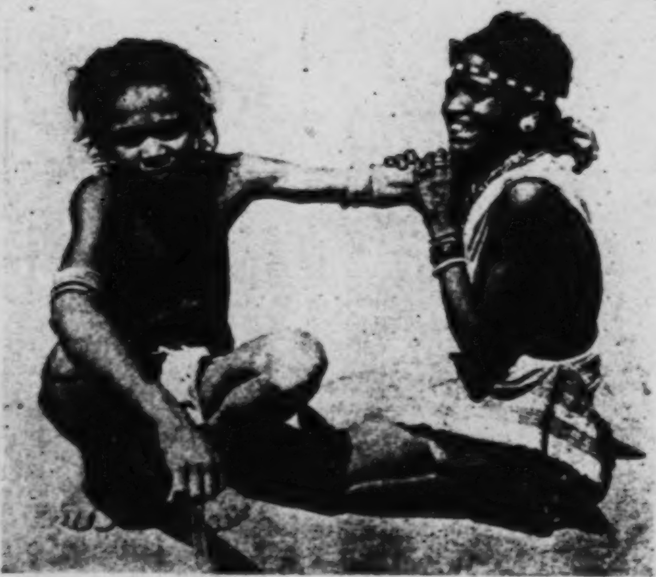
VI. THE SLEEPING-MAT

The *gik* or *masni*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a
352 boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which
is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

285 The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *āch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *āch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *āch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

Plate LXXIX





ABOVE: The Belosa combs the hair of the senior Kotwar at Nayanar

BELOW: The Alosa massages the junior Kotwar at Nayanar

[p.396(A)]

Plate LXXX

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The Malko of the Kuilibera ghotul

[p.396(B)]

883x

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under
their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty 513
of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting 352
them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

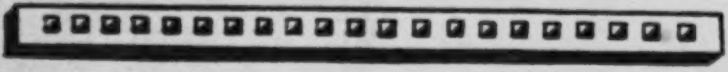
[285]

Fig. 96. The wooden *ack* used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 1′ 10″

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connect- 352
ed with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally
smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the 522
village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't 831
sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing.
It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably
just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

'We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them.'

—Common Muria saying

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THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

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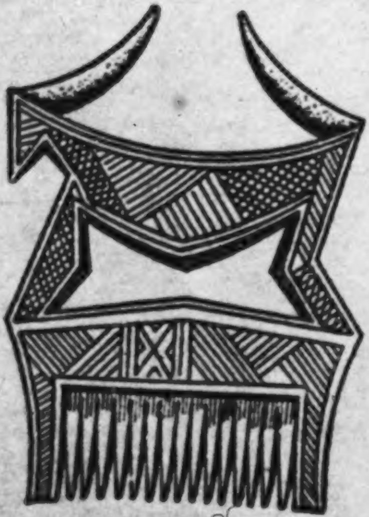

FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2¾"

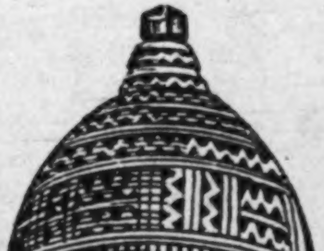

FIG. 99. The Pudo-gota
Actual size

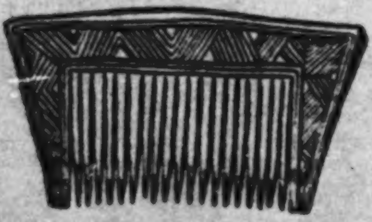

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must 883x 867

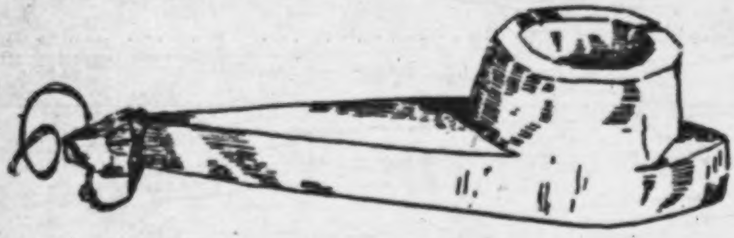

Fig. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 12"

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come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

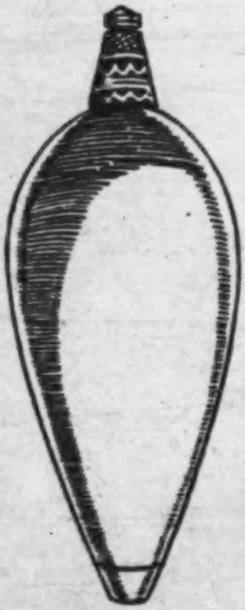

Fig. 101. The *Dudo-mari-gata*
Height 4"

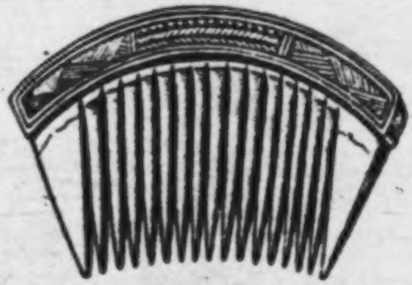

Fig. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3½"

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most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. '*Dudhir gai ke lat mithai*—The cow that gives milk:

X 883 867 even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood propesly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. X 883 867 183 To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

X 883 867 861 Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

[551] Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

X 883 863 861 The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *padra* or *padri*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Esalnar the culprit had to salute every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padra* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined. x883 863 861

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Fig. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pahara* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalized. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chelik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. 883x At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likandar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They 867 were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to 861 bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

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ghotul there was a boy called Antar (from a hunter-whip) who had the duty of 'whipping' boys who failed in this task.

Chelik and motiari are insistent that everyone must take an equal share (though not always the same share) in the common labour and common recreations. Failure to attend the ghotul regularly is punished; an absence of two or three days, unless there is a very good excuse, means a fine. It is specially bad for the motiari to absent themselves. This is regarded as a really serious offence, an infringement of the chelik's rights, a breach of ghotul fellowship; it raises the suspicion that the girl is having an affair with a married man or a member of another caste. On the other hand, if a girl enters the ghotul during her menstrual period she must provide liquor and perhaps a more substantial sacrifice to appease Lingo Pen whom she has offended.

A girl's conduct is controlled when she visits another village. She may g to the ghotul to dance and even perhaps massage and comb the boys but sh is expected to return home before bedtime. If she does not, and the boy of her own ghotul discover that she has betrayed them, they punish her with a heavy fine.

The motiari are often obstinate and troublesome—at least in male opinion—and have to be disciplined. Sometimes they get sulky and refuse to join the games and dances; the Jularo of Sarandi was fined an anna for failing to attend a dance. Sometimes they refuse 'to let a boy play with them on the ground'; sometimes they fail to comb or massage properly. At Kajen the ghotul Kotwar reports every Tuesday whether any of the girls have lost their combs, or have refused to do the chelik's hair.

It is regarded as very offensive for a chelik to force a girl against her will: in Markabera a chelik once forced the Alosa, who was the ghotul-wife of another boy, and was fined as much as two rupees. But if a girl refuses—once she is mature—to have intercourse with at least one of the chelik, there is consternation, and if she persists, both boys and girls may refuse to attend her wedding.

Boys also may be punished for failing to fulfil their social obligations. At Palari, the Baidar and Dafedar refused, on account of some private spite, to attend the Captain's marriage and each was fined four annas. At Gorma the headman's son, who went to school and learnt there to despise the ghotul and its ways, found when the day of his marriage approached that the boys and girls would not attend it. 'All these years', they said, 'you have despised us. You have not joined our dances or helped us in our work. Now you can get married without us.' The boy had to dress in all the Muria ornaments, change his little cap for a turban, and sleep in the ghotul for a week before he was forgiven.

III

Ghotul officers who fail to perform their duties are punished. No one is privileged and no one is exempt. This is an important point. Were an older man, like the Diwan of Masora who still holds office at the age of forty, to try to protect his own son or daughter, he would himself be fined even though he was the leader and a final court of appeal in all disputes. If the head of the chelik tried to protect his own special motiari or his ghotul-wife, he might be turned out of office. Bindo had no hesitation in punishing the Dulosa, who was his lover, for failing to clean the ghotul.

Mangru of Masora told us how when he was Pahardar it was his duty to punish people. But he could never bring himself to do it, so he himself was punished. His legs were tied to the roof and he had to hang there while boys and girls sang one Relo song. A former Chalki of the Jamkot ghotul

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari 883x
work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying
his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still 867
remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul 861
that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

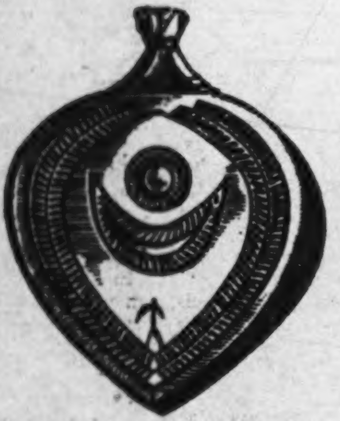

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2⅜"

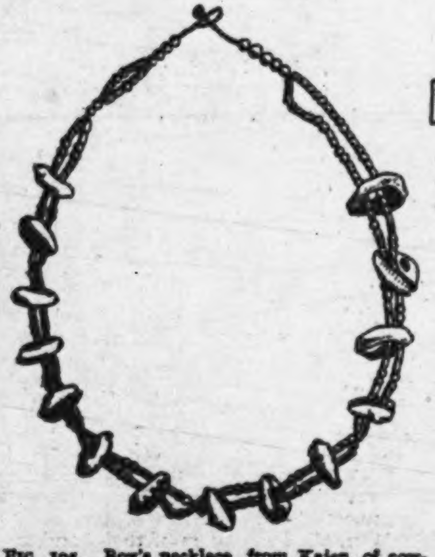

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FIG. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

X883 in his place. The Belosa of Berma was removed because she was too slack to control the girls.

867 861 I have only once heard of a boy being removed from office for abusing his sexual privileges. In Sonawal the Diwan seduced another chelik's 'wife'. The others fined him, but he refused to pay, saying, 'I am your master, I am not going to pay a fine to my "subjects"'. He and his own wife, the Diwanin, or head of the girls, were both degraded and made 'subjects'.

IV

X883 We now turn to breaches of the sexual conventions of the ghotul. Here, according to the type of ghotul, two opposite types of offence are recognized.

867 836 861 In those ghotul where there is a rule against 'pairing off', boys and girls are punished if they sleep together too often. The Subedar and Silo of the Binjhli ghotul were fined four annas each for sleeping together every day. In these ghotul too it is considered very bad form for a boy to be 'possessive' about a girl, to be jealous over her and claim her as his. 'We must change every two or four days, or we are fined.'

But in the other type of ghotul, boys and girls are fined for committing what may be called 'ghotul adultery'. A case of this has already been described in Chapter XI. If a chelik sleeps with another boy's motiari during her 'husband's' absence, he is fined. If the Kotwar 'finds the cloth of a girl' who is not the boy's 'mate' on his mat, he reports the matter and the boy is punished.

In villages where there are separate ghotul for boys and girls, they may be fined for visiting one another on days when this is taboo. In Lihagaon, where there were separate dormitories for boys and girls, some years ago the Likhen of the boys was Lamhada to the Mularo of the girls. One night she came to the boys' ghotul and slept with him—a double impropriety since engaged couples are not supposed to sleep together in the ghotul. He was fined a rupee by the chelik, but refused to pay, and on the third day ran away with the girl whom he had already made pregnant. They were brought back and fined two rupees. This time they paid up, and the ghotul members agreed to the marriage and said they would attend it.

With all the freedom of the ghotul, there is a strict insistence on decorum and modesty. It is remarkable that at weddings when the older women and men behave with a complete lack of restraint, abusing each other and catching hold of each other in the most obscene manner, the motiari are never molested. The chelik are sometimes punished for showing an indecent interest in the girls even in the ghotul. Once at Palari the girls were dancing the Durpa Dandi, or Lotus Stalk Dance, when each girl rests one leg on her neighbour's waist. It is considered a rather risky dance and the girls rarely perform it in public. The Kandki of the ghotul sat down near the dancers and tried to peep up in a rather unpleasant manner. The girls stopped dancing and took him inside the ghotul. 'What were you sitting down for?' 'Nothing.' 'You wanted to look at us, you dirty little beast, so we're going to punish you.' They tied his hands together and bound them to the roof for fifteen minutes. When he was released, he had to salute each of the girls in turn and beg forgiveness.

V

X883 861 How does the machinery of ghotul justice work? How are its punishments inflicted? I will give one or two actual examples before proceeding to tabulate the penalties.

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GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

In the first week of November, 1940, the older boys of the Masora ghotul were away watching the field-crops and the Chalan was in charge. For several days five of the girls—Belosa, Tiloka, Piosa, Janka and Alosa—had reported to him that they too were going to watch the crops. Actually, however, they went to sleep at home. Probably they found the ghotul dull without

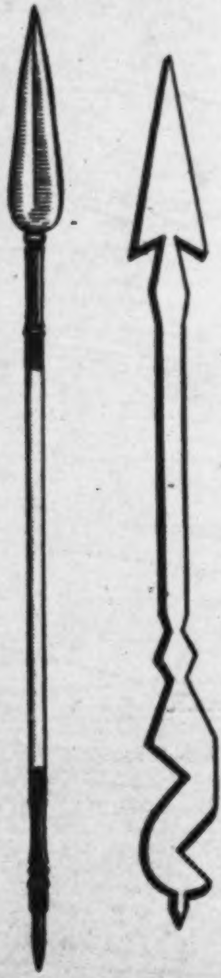

FIG. 106. The ghotul Kotwar's wooden spears
Lengths 6' 1" and 5' 1"

FIG. 107. Iron spears used by the chelik in hunting
Lengths 6' 6" and 5' 5"

the bigger boys; possibly they simply wanted a rest. On 4 November the Kamdar who, in the absence of the older boys, was attending to the girls' behaviour, reported to the Sipahi (ghotul 'policeman') his suspicion that the girls were deceiving them. That night they watched and found their belief well founded. They returned to the ghotul and told the Chalan. The Chalan issued orders that when the girls next came to report, they should be arrested and given the stick-punishment.

The next evening, when the Janka and Piosa came to say they were very sorry but they must go to watch in their fields, the Kamdar and Sipahi stopped them. But the girls abused them violently—'You can drink our urine, but you won't punish us, *mailotia*'—and ran away. When this was reported to the Chalan, he went to consult the Diwan, an older married man who exercised general supervision over this ghotul. The Diwan said, 'Call all the girls tomorrow night, and certainly punish them'.

On the afternoon of the 6th, therefore, the Kamdar went round the village telling all the boys and girls that they must attend, for 'tonight there will be a judgement in the ghotul'. But when the time came, Belosa, Tiloka and Piosa refused to come. The Chalan sent the Kamdar and Sipahi to bring them by force.

When they were at last assembled inside the ghotul—and it is noteworthy that neither the Diwan nor the older boys thought it necessary to attend: they were content to leave it to the juniors—the Chalan asked the Belosa whether it was true that she had been sleeping in her house, and why. She replied, 'There was no wood for the ghotul fire; it was cold; so I slept one night at home'. This retort, which implied that the boys had been failing in their duty of providing wood, and was probably true, was hardly tactful. The Chalan became abusive and pointed out that there was plenty of wood. 'You slept at home every night; you are all sleeping with married men.' Then he examined the other girls, but they refused to answer. At last the Alosa cried, 'It was only one night; all the other nights we were sleeping in the fields'.

No witnesses were called; everyone knew the girls were guilty. The Chalan said, 'What punishment will you have? Choose!' The motiari made no reply, so the Sipahi said, 'Why not make them get up and down a hundred times holding their ears?' 'No', said the Chalan. 'The stick-punishment would be better.' Hearing this, the Belosa broke out, 'Why should you punish us at all? We haven't done anything.' The Chalan replied, 'Well, why didn't you come to the ghotul? Why don't you answer our questions? We'll certainly punish you if you don't speak properly.'

But the girls were still silent, so the boys pushed them out of the ghotul and shut the door. The girls were now really frightened and did not dare to run away. They crouched against the wall in the cold, while the boys discussed their fate round the fire. At last the Chalan said to the Sipahi, 'Bring in those *bāploti*, and give them the stick-punishment'.

So the door was opened and five very subdued girls were brought in. The Chalan asked if they were ready for punishment and they said they were. The Kamdar brought in five thick logs, and put them between their legs, making them squat on the ground, away from the wall, their arms folded. They were sentenced to 'two Relo'. This meant they were to sit like this, and very uncomfortable it is, while the boys sang through two Relo songs. During the second song the Alosa touched the ground with her hand and was immediately slapped and pushed over by one of the boys. The Janka began to cry, and the boys roared with laughter. When the Relo songs were

Plate LXXXI

Chelik at Bandopal making a kutul head-rest

Chelik at Phunder making a comb

[p. 406 (A)]

Plate LXXXII

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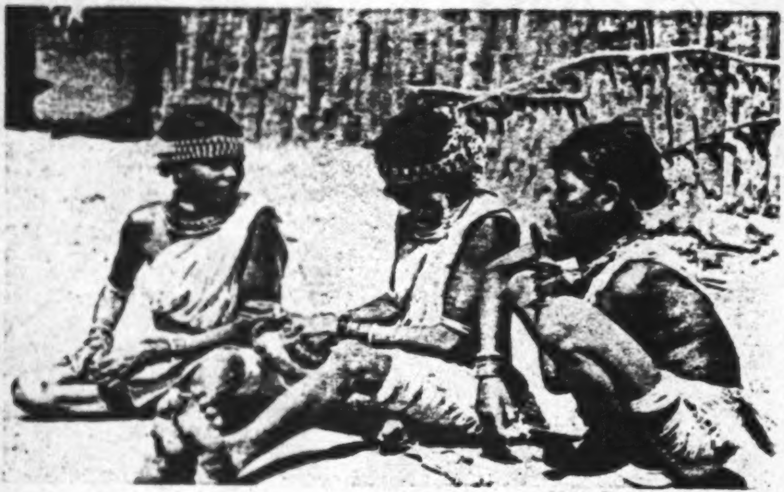

Motiari at Bandopal making
bead necklaces

A woman at Remawand
makes a mat

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finished, the Chalan asked the girls one by one if they would offend again. When each promised to be good in future, he let her get up. The girl who wept was forgiven last. Each girl had to go round the circle of boys and salute them with a smile. Then said the Chalan, 'That's finished. Now comb our hair and massage us, and we'll go to sleep'.

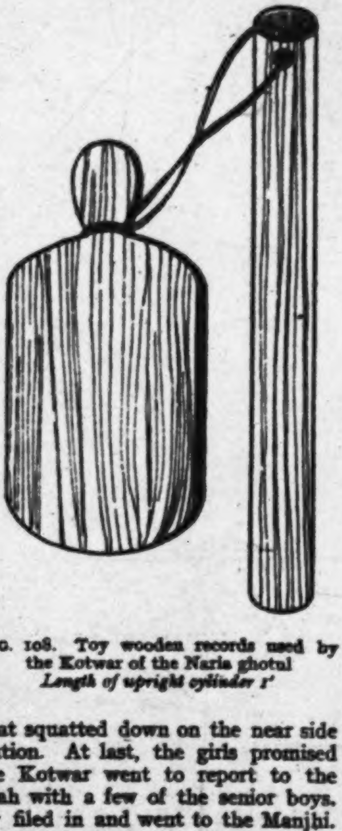

FIG. 108. Toy wooden records used by the Kotwar of the Naria ghotul
Length of upright cylinder 1'

Less severe treatment was given to the girls at Bandopal, when I was sleeping in the ghotul on 25 April 1941. At about 10 o'clock at night, as the dancing and games came to an end, I was surprised to see all the girls filing out of the courtyard and sitting by the gate. The Manjhi had discovered that the verandah of the main building, where he and the other leaders slept, had not been properly cleaned. He sent for the Belosa and Dulosa and ordered them to take their girls out of the compound. They did so, no one took any notice of them, the boys lay down and slept as usual, and for a time the girls sat quietly outside the gate. Presently a subdued and penitent voice called, 'Silledar, let us come in'. There was no reply. Then very seductively and sweetly, 'Kotwar, do let us come in'. Still no reply. There was a pause, and then two or three girls at once cried, 'Manjhi, let us in and we'll do anything you want'. This went on for half an hour, and then the Manjhi sent the Kotwar with four other boys to interview the girls. The panchayat squatted down on the near side of the gate and there was a long consultation. At last, the girls promised never to neglect their work again and the Kotwar went to report to the Manjhi who was sleeping on the verandah with a few of the senior boys. He told him to bring the girls in. They filed in and went to the Manjhi. He again made them promise to keep the ghotul clean, then forgave them and told them to massage him and the other senior boys as a penance before they went to sleep.

In the Chalka Pargana, in such villages as Kajen, Chimri and Temrugaon, the chelik imitate very closely the ordinary police procedure of the State. The ghotul Kotwar has a wooden spear (Fig. 106) in imitation of the State Kotwar's spear, and a wooden tablet (Fig. 108) which corresponds to the village report-book. It is his duty to report once a week (just as in fact the village watchman reports once a week) to the Inspector of Police, who records the information and if necessary takes it to the Diwan. Fines are paid in pieces of wood or siari seeds, a piece of wood representing a rupee. The thing has the semblance of a game but it is taken very seriously, and a fine of fifty 'rupees' means quite a lot of work.

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The following incident is typical. At Palari the Jhalko went to Banjora for a week in January 1942 and while she was away the Nirosa and Jhankai stayed away from the ghotul for five days. The Kotwar inquired into the matter, and made his usual report to the Havaldar who in turn referred it to the Inspector. The Inspector went to the Sirdar, the head of the ghotul, and reported that three girls had been absent.

'Have you examined them?' asked the Sirdar. 'What was their excuse?'

'I questioned them, but they had nothing to say.'

The girls were brought before the Sirdar and in cross-examination it came out that Jhankai had a sore place, and Jhalko claimed that she had been away in another village.

'Did you get the Kotwar's permission to go?'

'I asked him, but he didn't say anything. What was I to do? My parents told me to go.'

Witnesses were called to show that Jhalko stayed away for two days more after she had returned.

The Sirdar then pronounced sentence. The Jhalko would get up and down twenty times holding her ears. The Nirosa, who had no excuse at all, would do it eighty times, and the Jhankai fifteen times. This sentence was carried out, but the Nirosa managed to get hers reduced in appeal to ten. 'But I will count very carefully', said the Sirdar.

Afterwards the Sirdar asked the girls, 'Now you've been punished. Was it fair or are you angry with us?' Each of the girls in turn said, 'No, it was perfectly fair; I was guilty'.

On 25 March 1941, one of the boys at Chimri pretended to be a visiting official; he came into the ghotul and complained that it was dirty, there was no wood or fire. He sent for the Kotwar and Manjhi, who came with folded hands, and he abused them, fining them ten 'rupees' each. Another day the Kajen Kotwar reported to the Inspector that he had noticed on a boy's mat a cloth which belonged to a girl who was not his ghotul-wife. The Inspector pretended to write this down in his 'book', and sent the Constable who handcuffed the two lovers with lengths of siari twine and brought them to the Tahsildar. He lectured them and fined them five 'rupees' each. They appealed to the Diwan who enhanced the sentence to twenty-five 'rupees' or bits of green wood.

VI

These examples will be sufficient to show how the machinery of ghotul justice works and which officials are involved. It sounds like a game, but is taken very seriously. We have seen how the Kotwar or other boy with similar duties first discovers and reports an offence. It is investigated by the Thanedar or Inspector, who in turn brings the culprits before the Tahsildar. Finally the leader of the ghotul considers the case, pronounces judgement and inflicts punishment. In those ghotul which have some older man still holding office an appeal may lie to him. There is often a boy whose special duty it is to carry out the sentence.

The punishments inflicted are of some variety. We have already seen the *khotla pahara*, or stick-punishment, in operation. Sometimes the stick is put through both legs and arms and the hands are tied in front. In Kajen it was the Tahsildar's special duty to see that the victims did not support themselves against the wall or ground.

The *porohal werhana* or *pahara orator* is more severe. Hands and feet are tied and the victim is slung from the roof by his feet, remaining topsy-turvy while the others sing one, two or three Relo songs.

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Kawing taliyana is the very common Indian punishment of making someone squat down on the ground and get up and down holding his ears with his hands. It is difficult, exhausting and undignified. But it is not very painful and it leaves no trace, which probably accounts for its popularity among subordinate officials. In Lihagaon, pebbles were held to the ears while the culprit was pushed up and down twenty-five to fifty times. This was how the Manjhi punished Dursal Rani in the song recorded at p. 608.

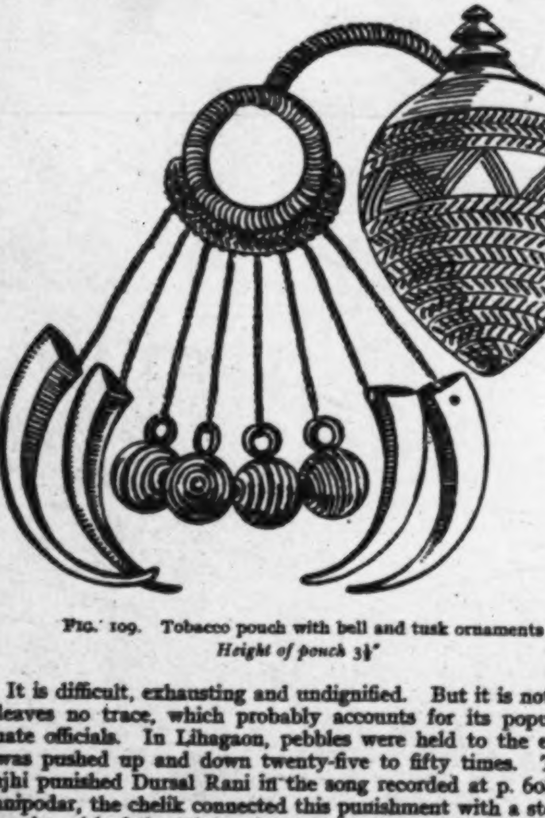

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FIG. 109. Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments
Height of pouch 3½"

At Nanipodar, the chelik connected this punishment with a story of a Raja and a dancing girl of the Mirdangiya caste—whose girls are famous for their wit and beauty.

> There was a Mirdangiya. She danced before a Raja. He was so pleased that he said, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it to you'. She said, 'Spit on the floor and then lick up the mess'. The Raja said, 'How can a Raja do such a thing?' Then the Mirdangiya said, 'Very well then, give me the turban from your head'. He did so and she wore it herself and went away well pleased.

The movements of a girl jumping up and down holding her ears are supposed to resemble the Mirdangiya dancing before the Raja, and the chelik taunt the girls saying, 'Ho re Mirdangiya! Today you've become Mirdangiya'. To which the girls reply, 'We are Kanchnin [good and beautiful] girls. If we were Mirdangiya we would be dancing and you'd have to give us your turbans.'

The boys laugh and say, 'Then it was the Raja who was punished, now it is the Mirdangiya'.

Nit mandana or *kal nitana pahara* is a simple punishment of expulsion and endurance. A boy or girl is made to stand outside the ghotul fence on one leg with the other leg pressed against it, while the others sing a number of Relo songs.

The *nagil puhana pahara* or plough-penalty is fairly common as a punishment for breaking wind. One chelik pulls the legs of the victim and two push down his shoulders; legs are pushed and shoulders pulled until he is exhausted.

In the *porokal karhana* the culprit is made to spread-eagle himself from the roof and to hang there till permitted to come down.

The *korit pahara* is simply a 'pushing about' punishment. Everybody pushes and smacks and pulls the victim about till he cries for mercy.

In Masora they sometimes tie the culprit's hair to the roof and make him stand like that for so many songs. Sometimes his hands are tied together up to the roof.

It will be noted that these punishments can be described, shall we say, as chronic rather than acute. The sharp, abrupt sting of corporal punishment so familiar to the European schoolboy is unknown. The punishments, in so far as these are physical at all, involve the endurance of discomfort and distributed pain, and above all the loss of dignity. This is perhaps what we would expect of so gentle a people to whom the catastrophic decisiveness of a flogging would appear intolerable. Even the punishments must be associated with something beautiful; they are endured to the sound of music, the rhythmic movements of the Relo songs.

A fine is a very common form of penalty. In the ghotul the fines are almost always interpreted in terms of bits of wood or siari seeds. A fine of ten rupees probably means ten bits of green wood (dry wood is brought by the younger boys in the daily routine), a fine of a hundred means a hundred siari seeds. This type of substitution is not confined to the ghotul. In Bandopal I once saw a root sacrificed instead of the pig the villagers could not afford, and elsewhere I have seen sticks given in place of chickens—sacrificed and treated exactly as if they really were chickens.

The seed-fines are collected until there is enough to invite the whole village to a party. Any monetary fines are usually put in charge of the village headman for safety, and used to buy liquor. The seeds are fried as a relish; liquor is distributed; and it is said that during this party the chelik and motiari recount the history of the fines and penalties of the past year to the amusement and benefit of all.

The most dreaded punishment is expulsion from the ghotul. A foretaste of this is given to very small boys who fail to bring their daily wood, when their elders refuse to accept their Johar in the evening. The little boy goes round the circle saying Johar, but each chelik looks through him and refuses to answer. This soon reduces the child to penitence and he promises never to offend again. If he does, or if the little girls fail to clean the building, they may be sent to sit outside the door for two or three hours. This is regarded as equivalent to excommunication. It is a rather pathetic sight to see a little boy or girl, in the cold winter or the rains, crouching lonely by the door while the others enjoy the warmth and company inside. Occasionally a boy or girl is forbidden to join the ghotul expeditions or go to a marriage. Sometimes members are actually expelled—incurable laziness, obstinate refusal to submit to ghotul discipline, a quarrelsome temperament, the breach of

Plate LXXXIII

The turban as box

Girls wearing cowrie head-dress

[p. 410 (a)]

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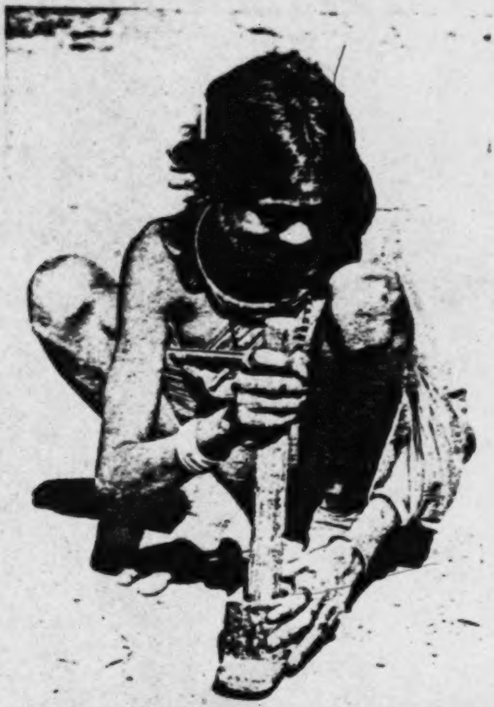

Motiari of Palli pounding tobacco in a wooden mortar for the chelik

Plate LXXXIV

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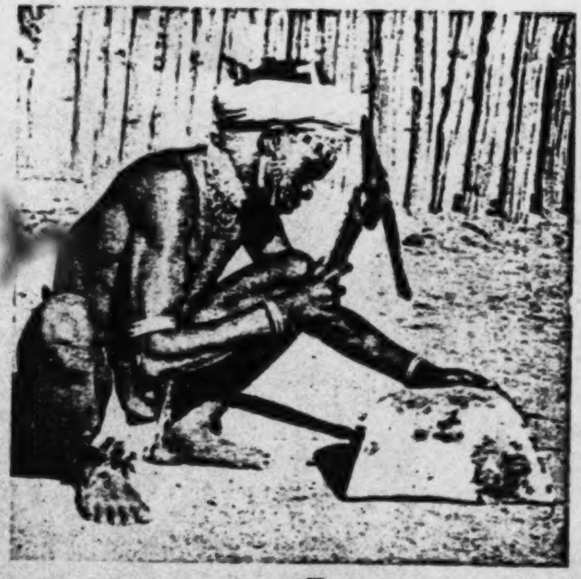

The Chalan of Jhakri preparing a pitorka drum

[p. 410 (B)]

x 883 clan and relationship rules may lead to this extreme penalty. It is indeed
861 extreme, for it means the death of youth, the loss of company and the shame of a wedding without dancers.

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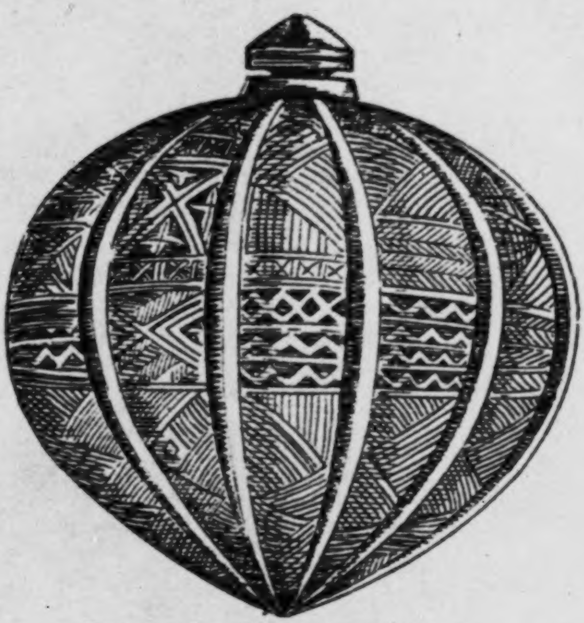

FIG. 110. Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar
Actual size

That is, in fact, the final sanction of the ghotul rules—the fear that the chelik and motiari will refuse to attend one's wedding. It is no idle threat; it has been done; it has been still more often threatened, and the parents have had to pay a fine. Once at Jhakri the Piosa failed to do her share of bringing leaves at someone's marriage, and the boys said, 'This girl is too great for us. She evidently likes to be alone. Well, she shall marry alone'. When her marriage day arrived there was a great disturbance and the elders of several villages had to pacify the offended boys. But at last, after her parents had given a gift of liquor, they agreed to assist.

No reader of Chapter V can fail to see the importance of this threat. No wedding can proceed without chelik and motiari. Their absence would mean that on the greatest day of one's life there was drabness, mockery and disgrace. So long as this ultimate sanction remains, the youngsters submit cheerfully to all the penalties, harsh as they may sometimes seem, that the leaders of the ghotul may inflict.[1]

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[1] Anyone who thinks the ghotul discipline too hard should read a curious paper by Thurston on 'Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools' in India, in which forty-two different manifestations of pedagogic sadism are listed.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 433-40.

VII

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It may be of interest to compare these penalties with the disciplinary measures taken in other village dormitories. There is a curious account in an old book on the Chittagong Hill Tract by Captain Lewin, who was Deputy Commissioner of this area and seems to have been a man of considerable sympathy and knowledge.

> In the village communities, even as the adults have a recognized head, so also is there a head boy appointed to control the boys of the village. This head of the juvenile community is called the *goung*. I shall give here, as illustration of their village customs, a recital which I heard told at the camp fire one night in the jungles, by one of our policemen of the Palaingtsa clan. He said: 'I was formerly *goung* over the unmarried lads of Hmraphroo village; this was when I was about seventeen years old. At night all who were unmarried, and weaned from their mothers, used to sleep in the *khiong*. One night Ougjyn, and Reyphaw, and Chaindra, came to me and got leave to go and sleep with their sweethearts. The girls were named Aduhbyn, Hlapyn, and Aduhsheay. I remember their names quite well; they are married now, and two of them have children. Our lads went by stealth, of course: if the parents had known it there would have been a row. Next day a little girl told me that Pynhla, another of our lads, who had not got leave to sleep out, had passed the night with her sister. This was quite contrary to rule, and it was therefore determined to punish him. Next day we all went to the Raja's *joom* to help to build his house, and in the evening, when we returned, we made a big fire on the bank of the stream that runs through the village; and I sent and called Pynhla, but he was afraid, and would not come; he stayed in his father's house, and said he had fever. I knew this was only an excuse; so I sent three lads to bring him forcibly, and they went and brought him, although his mother abused them much; but the father and mother could not hurt them, as they were acting by the *goung*'s order. When he came, I called upon him to say why he had slept away from the *khiong* without leave. At first he denied all about it, and then I brought forward the little girl, and he asked her, 'How did you know it was I? It was dark'; and she said, 'The moon shone on your face in the early morning when you opened the door to go away'. When he heard this he saw there was no escape, and he fell at my feet and asked forgiveness; but I fined him three rupees on the spot for the sake of discipline.[1]

In the Uraon *dhumkuria*, as in Bastar, many different punishments are inflicted. In Mandar the boys described the penalty for not keeping the dormitory clean; if any animal or bird dirtied the place they had to make the excrement into little balls with their own hands and throw it away. If a boy wet his bed, they said, the others stuck a pin into the ground and spat on it; the offender had to pick it up with his own teeth. In the middle of the ruined dormitory at Agru I saw a fine stone pillar. Boys who failed to attend the dances were forced to hop round this five times with two bits of bamboo tied tightly to their legs. Fines were also inflicted.

Roy has described the 'slit' in the central pillar of 'some of the *dhumkuria*' and connects it with a fertility ceremony in which the boys insert their 'penile organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

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[1] T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870), pp. 118ff.

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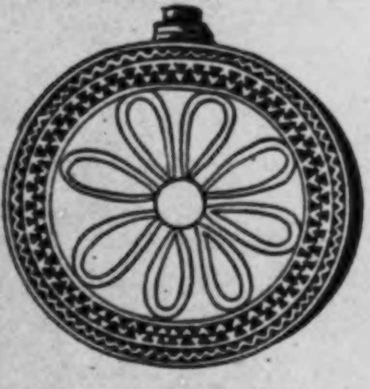

FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4¼"

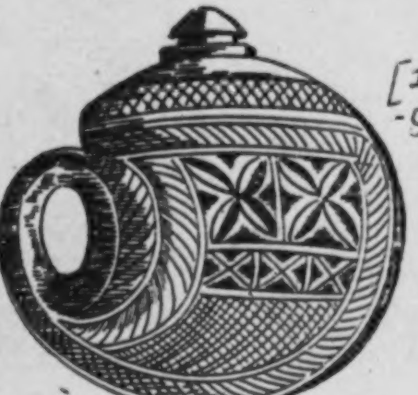

FIG. 112. *Marka-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box
Height 2¼"

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangar* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243.

[2] p. 53.

[3] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 51.

x 883 861 171 'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.' [1]

VIII

x 883 835 Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight, considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

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[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell. 883x 835

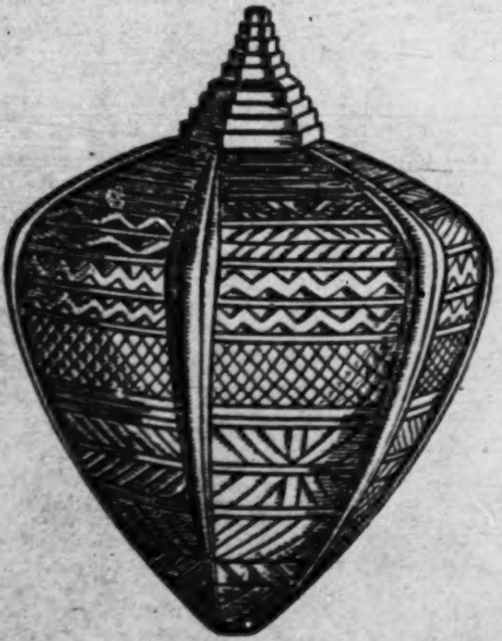

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FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2⅜"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual x883 835 way, though not always with the full ceremonial. Indeed a girl should be married to the boy she is engaged to—if he will have her—as soon as possible. At Kibi Belanga, for example, a Maravi boy, the Panda of the ghotul, used to have intercourse with a Maravi girl, and she became pregnant. The matter became known to the elders of the village who fined him and married the girl quickly to a Naitami boy of Kidir village to whom she was engaged. The child was born three months after marriage and was accepted by the husband. A few years ago in Hathipakna there was a scandal when the Malko, 'a daughter of Naitami', was made pregnant by the Jamadar, also a Naitami. They attempted an abortion, without success, but after the boy's father had paid twelve rupees, the Malko was married, by the reduced ceremonies, to a boy at Sodma.

The kindly, gentle Muria makes things as easy as possible for the young. 'Even an elephant with four legs sometimes stumbles.' 'What can you do to one who has missed the road?' But if the girl refuses to leave her lover, the matter becomes very serious, and both are outcasted. In Metawand, I was told that such people were never re-admitted into the tribe, and after death only the chelik would touch their bodies and take them to the pyre. If a *kutukal* was erected it would have to be apart from the others.

A few years ago, at Alor, a member of the Kuhrami clan eloped with a Kuhrami girl. They were condemned by the panchayat, but took no notice. For 'the mouth that desires its fill and the genitalia that are excited never listen to advice'. They are now living together at Hirri. No Muria will eat with them, and at festivals of the clan-god they get no share of the consecrated meat. If a son is born, he will be called Bhula Huwa, but he will not be regarded as outcaste. He will have all the tribal privileges denied his parents. 'For he was tied up in the bundle; he knew nothing of what was done.'

This rigorist attitude is not so much one of moral condemnation as due to a fear of the supernatural vengeance that may descend upon the whole clan. In some cases, the guilty pair are forgiven if they perform an elaborate ceremony and pay sufficient fines. For two years they have to wait. Then if the Gaita approves he takes them to a tank or stream. Near the bank they make a ring of stakes and build a little bamboo wall, covering it with grass and thatch, inside which the boy and girl are made to stand together. The grass is set on fire and as it blazes up they jump through the flames into the water. After bathing, they put on new clothes and throw the old ones into the water. They make suitable offerings to the gods and are henceforth free of their guilt.

x883 835 762 The general atmosphere of kindly tolerance probably accounts for the fact that so few tragedies have occurred. In the police records of the last ten years there are only two cases of suicide which arose out of clan-incest. The first was in January 1932. Chime and Kule of the Timri ghotul were of the same clan and in love with one another. The girl's parents married her to a boy called Jhola, from Supbeda, who had a wife already. She left him and it is said that she returned to the Timri ghotul and began to sleep there again. If this is true, it is remarkable in view of the normally strict taboo on married girls entering the ghotul. But all such rules are broken sometimes. After a time she was found to be pregnant but only after several months did the matter come to the ears of the village elders. When they questioned Chime about it, she took the hand of Kule and named him as the father of the unborn child. This was too much for him and on the night of 18 January, though he went to the ghotul as usual, when all were asleep he went quietly out and hanged himself.

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself. 883x 835- 762 [276 531]

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2½"

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *salmat*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated. 883x 835

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done. 883x 835 539

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

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[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Leti, son of Dhansoji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bhimsen. Leti was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

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father-in-law?' The old man crept out of bed and stood behind the wall. When the girl asked the question, he replied in a loud, strange voice, 'Your father-in-law is going to die; there is only one way to save him; lie with him and his fever will be cured'. At this the girl was frightened and said to the Departed, 'But the marriage haldi is still on my body, how can I do such wickedness? The marriage booth is yet green, how can I betray my husband?' But the old man replied, 'If you want your father-in-law to live, do as we say; the sin will not be yours, but that of the Dead'. Then the poor daughter-in-law went back to the old man and told him what the Departed had said, and he asked her what she thought of it. She said she was willing to do what they ordered and she lay with him. When all was over, she asked whether his fever had left him, and he told her that it had, and praised her devotion to the Departed.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

With reference to those parts of the human body which, because of their intimate conjunction with organs of drainage, suffer an opprobrium both unwarranted and psychologically dangerous, I think much trouble and misunderstanding can be avoided if we observe the world of flowers. Exactly as 'Roses and lilies fair on a lawn' display the sexual parts of the rose and the lily, so, in literal fact, our sexual parts are our flowers, and that is a decent and salutary and sweetening way in which to regard them. . . Prudence is necessary, but not error, and nursery prejudices should not cloud our reason.—Eric Gill, *Drawings from Life* (London, 1940), p. xv.

I

THE Muria has a simple, innocent and natural attitude to sex. In the ghotul this is strengthened by the absence of any sense of guilt and the general freedom from external interference. The Muria believe that sexual congress is a good thing; it does you good; it is healthy and beautiful; when performed by the right people (such as a chelik and motiari who are not taboo to one another), at the right time (outside the menstrual period and avoiding forbidden days), and in the right place (within the ghotul walls where no sin can be committed), it is the happiest and best thing in life. 883x 833

This belief in sex as something good and normal gives the Muria a light touch. Nari's saying that the penis and vagina are *hassi ki nāt*, in a 'joking relationship' to each other, admirably puts the situation. Sex is great fun; it is the best of ghotul games; it is the dance of the genitals; it is an ecstatic swinging in the arms of the beloved. It ought not to be too intense; it must not be degraded by possessiveness or defiled by jealousy. It is believed that the best and most successful sex relations are to be had in the modern ghotul where partners often change.

The very idea of a Platonic attachment is ridiculous. Young chelik and motiari may sleep together for a long time without congress, but consummation is the end and goal. 'Thirst is not quenched by licking dew.' Let us consider a remarkable document that was given Shamrao Hivale by the villagers of Palli. A newly-married boy found himself impotent—he had not experienced this embarrassment in the ghotul; it was supposed to have been brought upon him by the hostile magic of a former lover—yet however caused it threatened to destroy his happiness. This is how the other chelik described his wife's attitude—she was only a few weeks out of the ghotul, still practically a motiari. Some of the phrases used are probably traditional, for they occur in songs.

'I didn't come to your house', she is supposed to have said, 'just to eat rice. I could have got rice anywhere. I'm not going to stay here just looking at your face. You may have money, but that can only fill my stomach, not my heart. I could fill my stomach myself by going out to work. Well, now I'm off—anywhere, anywhere in the world so long as my heart can be filled. Where the heart is not filled what girl will stay? God made man and woman for this very work. It was to fill each other's hearts that he made ants, worms, birds, rats, pigs, tigers and every other thing. They all live with their mates and copulate. They all marry and love comes from their copulation. But I don't find love by just looking at your face. If your cart-pole was not in place, what did you marry for?

x883 When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

833 Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

x883 582 Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

x883 834 Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

x883 589 Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sannyās* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

x883 537 538 In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

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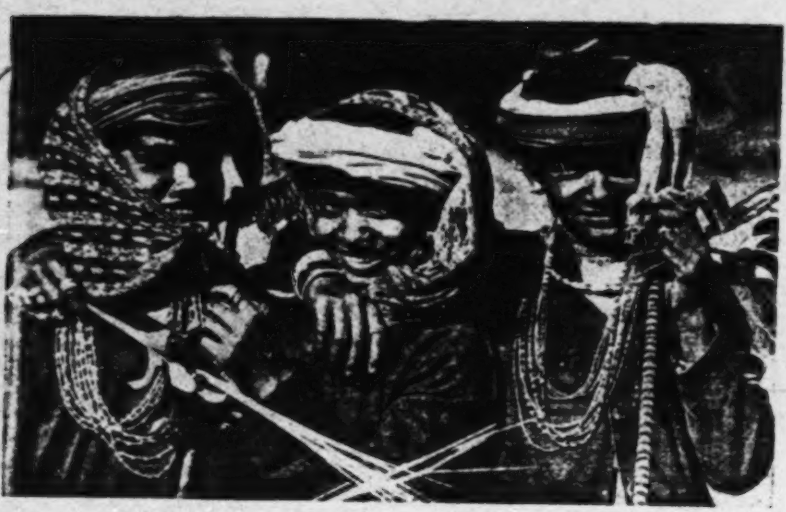

Jhoria dancers at Kabonga

Jhoria dancers at Amasara

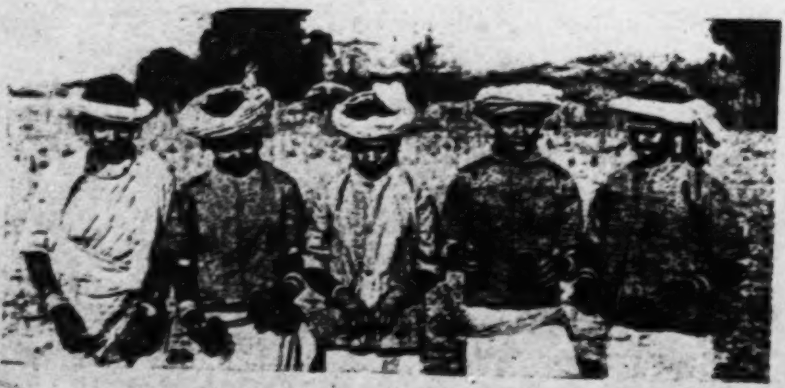

Plate LXXXV

Plate LXXXVI

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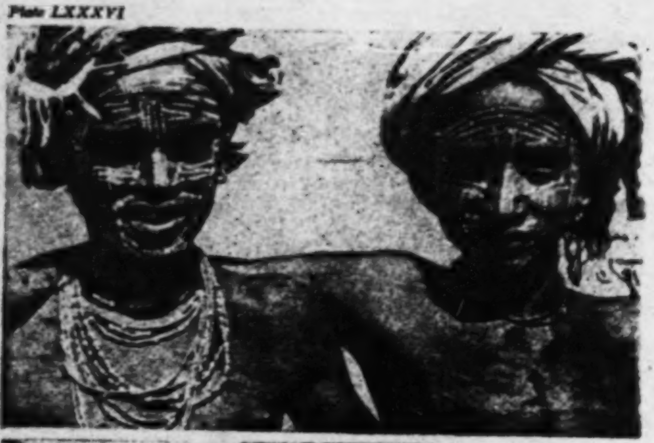
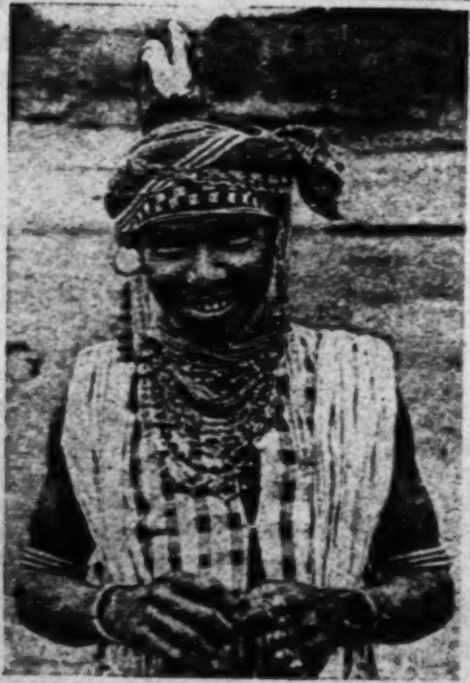


Chelik with face decorations



The Likhen of the Timsar ghotul

[p.420(B)]

X883 589 538 Atargaon, is about the seven motiari who knew nothing about sex. One day they went to gather leaves with their grandmother. The old lady climbed a tree and the girls looked up and saw her vagina. When she told them what it was for, they were so frightened that they left the ghotul and went to live far away in the jungle. Whenever they saw a man they beat him and drove him away. The story proceeds through various adventures to the inevitable conclusion. Each of the girls is seduced by a sadhu and becomes pregnant.

X883 539 Another story, given me by Sonu, a Muria of Jamkot, is of interest as emphasizing the ghotul doctrine of equality, that everyone in the ghotul fellowship must be loved and happy: if not, disaster may befall.

> There were seven score chelik and seven score motiari. All slept together in the ghotul. One of them was the son of a grazier of goats, and none of the girls would sleep with him. When he came to the ghotul, they would abuse him. 'Get out, you grazier's son, you block of wood.' The boy's name was Lakari; that was why they called him a block of wood. But Lakari was a clever boy and he made a love-charm.
>
> One day the boys and girls decided to go to Kodawata to earn their living. When he heard of this, Lakari decided to have all the girls for himself. He put the boys to sleep by his charms. When the girls were ready for their journey, he went ahead beating his drum. They thought that all the boys had started and set out after them.
>
> Now Lakari was very poor; his bed was the earth, his blanket was the air, his pillow was his own elbow. He was so poor that no girl would let him sleep with her. He went along with an axe over his shoulder, his *dhol* drum slung from his arm and a drumstick in one hand. He led the girls away into the jungle, on and on for a whole month. When he beat the drum they ran after him, but he always kept at a distance so that they wouldn't know who it was.
>
> The jungle stretched for twelve *kos* on every side, there was not even the name of a village. The jungle was called Madhuban, the sweet forest; the trees were so tall that it seemed the moon had stuck to them. When Lakari had led the girls into the very heart of this jungle, he took off his clothes and sat shivering with cold. When the girls saw that the chelik were not there and it was only Lakari who had brought them all that way, they were angry and disappointed.
>
> On a hill-top between two rivers Lakari built a ghotul for himself. On the far side of the river he made another house for the girls. They refused to visit him or even look at him, they were so angry. By the time the rains began they found they had eaten all their provisions for the year. Lakari himself had nothing; he lived on honey.
>
> Now at last one of the girls came to him and said, 'How are we to live here without a village or bazaar? Even you can give us nothing to eat'. Lakari replied, 'I will see to everything; come with me to the bazaar and we will get what we want'. The girls went fishing in the river, and this girl brought fish in a basket and he himself took honey and they went together to the bazaar at Ladri. They sold their things and bought what they wanted. On the way back, Lakari went as slowly as he could so that they would have to spend the night in the jungle and the girl would have to sleep with him. When darkness fell he made her a bed in the sand of a river; there was one bed for him and one for her with a fire between. He had brought food and ornaments to please her.

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At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha huhu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said, 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

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The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urkul bukka*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titigule*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *māya* and sometimes *piril* or *perem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda kohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *bondę dokalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiyâna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

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Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gohivailaiseh.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dandi bundle bursa.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondâng lewa boleng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

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[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *preet* or *wunchelee* for the 'affections', mya *lalalor* for 'beloved', and *nohilla* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

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Itna lewa patwa tado.
Touch it and up it goes.
—A mat, or the penis.

Mela aur jela bahir jhule
Mantor hach hutile lopa narey kiyāntor.
Mela and Jela swing to and fro outside;
The iron rice-husker is at work within.
—Sexual congress.
Three are dancing in a thick jungle.
—Sexual congress.
There are two witnesses to this thief's escapades.
—The testes and penis.

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But if their anatomical knowledge of the genitalia is slight, the Muria compensate for it by an extensive mythology of sex, which is, I think, even more elaborate than that of the Bison-horn Maria and the Orissa tribes.

It is remarkable that the Muria seem to regard the sexual organs, whether male or female, as living things with an independent life of their own.[1] For example, one of the reasons given for forbidding urination inside the ghotul is that the girls' urine would smell abominably because her labia majora are always chewing her urine as she walks about—just as a goat chews its food, and therefore a girl's urine smells as strongly as a goat's.

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There are several stories about the vagina, though the Vagina Dentata legend, known throughout the Central Provinces and Orissa, is comparatively rare. The following story is from Masora.

> Long ago the vagina had the power of leaving its body at night and going out to feed in the fields. It had teeth with which it could eat; it would stay out all night grazing in the fields and return satisfied in the morning.
>
> By and by the village people began to say, 'What is this thing that comes at night and eats up our crops? Let us set traps and catch it'. So they set traps in their fields, and that night when the vaginae came to feed they were caught and the villagers collected them and took them to the Gaita's house in a big basket. They shut them up in an inner room and went to report the matter to the Raja. The Raja sentenced the vaginae to be hanged.
>
> When they heard this, the villagers were frightened, for they said, 'How are we to live with our wives if their organs are destroyed?' So they went to the Raja asking him to forgive them and promising to repay the owners of the fields for whatever damage had been done.
>
> The Raja said, 'First of all the teeth must be broken and removed from the vaginae. Whoever can do this will be rewarded'. No one knew how to do it until at last a one-eyed policeman, who himself had a knife growing from his penis, declared that he would deal with the matter. With his knife he removed the teeth and then with hammer and nails fixed every vagina back in its place. The nail he used is the clitoris which stands above the vagina to hold it steady. The vaginae then cursed the man who had done them this injury and turned him

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[1] A similar idea is found in the Crow Indian tale *Mentula Loquens*, where a man's penis begins to talk and refuses to stop.—R. H. Lowie, 'Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXV ([illegible]), p. [illegible].

> into a pig. Even today the pig's virile member is shaped like a knife.[1]

A rather similar tale from Palari (Kondagaon Tahsil) connects the incident with Bhimul and his wife.

> The vagina used to creep out of the body where it lived and go in search of maize and cucumbers. It would nibble its way through a fence and steal from the field. The farmers made fences of iron and now when the vagina tried to get through, its teeth were knocked out by the iron. A small bit of iron stuck in the vagina's mouth and became the clitoris. When the teeth came out, blood flowed from the mouth and the vagina went to Bhimul for help.
>
> Now the penis of Bhimul was five hands long and he cut it into several pieces, each four fingers long. He put one piece into the vagina's mouth and said, 'Don't eat cucumbers or maize any more: from today this will be your food'. But the bleeding did not stop, and Bhimul said, 'It will stop soon and then after a month it will bleed again'. Such was the beginning of women's menstruation.
>
> There was blood at the end of Bhimul's penis where he had cut it. It went into the belly of the woman to whom the vagina belonged and she conceived. This is how the birth of children began.
>
> In those days men had no genitals. One day they went to Bhimul to complain about this. He fixed a bit of his own penis with wax between the thighs of a man. Such was the beginning. But the penis fell off as the wax melted. They went to Gorondi Dokari (Bhimul's wife) and she put two small chickens under the penis to support it. Such is the origin of the testes.[2]

Another Vagina Dentata story comes from Koelari.[3]

> There was a Rakshasa's daughter with teeth in her vagina. She used to live mostly as a tigress and kept ten or twelve tigers always with her. When she saw a man, she would turn into a pretty girl, seduce him, cut off his penis, eat it herself and give the rest of his body to her tigers.
>
> One day she met seven brothers in the jungle and married the eldest so that she could sleep with them all. After some time she took the eldest boy to where her tigers lived, made him lie with her, cut off his penis, ate it and gave his body to the tigers. In the same way she killed six of the brothers till only the youngest was left.
>
> When his turn came, the god who helped him appeared in a dream saying. 'If you go with this girl, make an iron tube, put it into her vagina and break her teeth'. The boy acted according to his dream, and when the tigers came for his body, he climbed into a mango tree

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[1] Similar stories among the Bison-horn Maria relate how a man once caught a vagina eating his gram and knocked its teeth out with a pestle; in another tale, from Kamell, people used to feed the wandering vagina out of charity. When it was satisfied it would open its mouth and do men no harm. Even now the vagina has not forgotten its old habit of eating *gur* and gram and still tries to 'bite' the male member by its muscular contractions.

[2] Elsewhere the Muria said, 'The testes are the children of the penis and have sapped their father's strength. Only when the children restore the strength can their father work'.

[3] I present a large number of similar legends recorded from the Gond and Pardhan of the Central Provinces, the Bison-horn Maria of Bastar, and the Juang, Gadaba and Savara of Orissa in my forthcoming book *Myths of Middle India.*

> and made himself very small. The tigers chased him and the girl too became very angry. He cursed her; 'Let nothing but your face remain'. And so it was; she became a bat which eats, excretes, urinates and copulates through one and the same hole. One of the mangoes opened and the boy crept inside. A parrot carried off the mango to the Raja's palace.

The parrot dropped the fruit, it broke open, out came the boy and after various adventures married the Raja's daughter. The hero of an Agaria story was similarly saved by the use of an iron condom.[1]

Sometimes it is said that originally the vagina was situated below the knee of the left leg. One day a chicken pecked at it, and it jumped up to a place of safety between the thighs where it has remained ever since. But it was wounded and blood still flows from it every month. From Bara Dongar comes the tale of the vagina which died.

> One day a vagina died and its companions were wondering what to do with it. 'Shall we cremate it or bury it?' said some, but others said, 'Let us divide it among us'. They cut it up and each stuck a portion on itself. This is the origin of the lips [labia majora]. The woman whose vagina died was the first hermaphrodite.

In the same style is a story from Alor, which has the familiar competition-motif.

> The breasts and the vagina had a quarrel. 'I am the greater,' said the vagina. 'It is for my sake that men go mad and die.'
>
> 'No,' said the breasts. 'We are greater. It is our beauty that men come to see. If there were no breasts, who would come to you?'
>
> 'If there was no vagina, who would bother about you? Do men chase a flower or a lovely stream?'
>
> 'Men see us from afar and excited by our beauty draw near. It is only then that they notice you; first they touch us, then you.'
>
> 'But no one gets pleasure from touching you.'
>
> 'But if they didn't see and touch us, how would they be excited? You would be neglected entirely.'
>
> So quarrelling, the vagina and the breasts parted and went their ways. As they went along, the breasts met a man and he took them aside and began to fondle them. But when he looked down and saw nothing there, he went disappointed away.
>
> Then the breasts went to the vagina and said, 'Come, sister, you have won the battle; you are the greatest of all'.

There are also legends about the penis. Originally it was of gigantic size.

> Once the penis was so long that as a man lay in bed it could get out of the house and penetrate a woman a hundred yards away. When he went abroad, a man would wind it round and round his waist and tuck in the end.
>
> One day a penis broke through the wall of the house, entered a woman, came out of her mouth, dipped its head into a cooking-pot and ate all the supper, and in withdrawing killed the woman. Then all the women

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[1] For a discussion of this legend, see my article 'The Vagina Dentata Legend', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XIX (1943), pp. 439–53. For accounts of its distribution in North America, see W. Bogoras, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. IV (New Series), p. 667 and R. H. Lowie, 'The Test-Theme in North American Mythology', *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXI (1908), p. 110.

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> came to cut it off. The man grasped his penis with his hand, but that was all he could save. The women cut it off and it is now only a handsbreadth long.[1]

Another version of the tale, however, connects the disappearance of the long penis with the Vagina Dentata legend.

> In the old days there were teeth far back in the vagina. One day when the long penis went in, the teeth cut it and all that remained was a stump of its present length. Angry at this, the man brought a rice-husker and broke off the teeth. In those days the penis itself was covered with thorns; it stood up like a semur tree. But there were no thorns at the root. The thorny part was cut off, and the smooth part remains to this day.[2]

In this mythical past it was man, not woman, who was subject to a menstrual period.

> Formerly men had to live outside their houses every month. They used to tie hollow bamboos over the penis to catch the blood. One day a girl saw this and laughed at the man. He pulled the bamboo off and threw it at her.[3] Since then women have suffered this flowing of the blood instead of men.

III. Erotic Attractiveness

832 I found it very difficult to get the Muria to give any clear account of what they meant by beauty. They are always moved by the loveliness of natural scenery, but they are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves except when the words of a song or proverb provide them with a ready means of utterance. The following Chitkul Pata from Amakot, for example, reveals not a little aesthetic appreciation.

Jilāng jāpar bandār!	How beautiful the lake!
Bandār soba bārāng?	Why is the lake so beautiful?
Bandār soba pāri,	Lovely are the banks of the lake,
Bandār soba yero.	Lovely the waters of the lake.
Yero soba minur.	Lovely are the fish in the water.
Minur soba bārāng?	To the fish what is lovely?
Minur soba sila.	To the fish the water-reeds are lovely.
Pārar soba bārāng?	On the bank what is lovely?
Pārar soba marka,	On the bank the mango trees,
Kāndi udo marka,	The mango's spreading branches,
Waliya wālo gorga.	And the palm trees everywhere.

In human beings the Muria seem to admire liveliness, animation, vigour more than perfection of colour or feature. They apply their universal test of hard work not only to assess a person's morals, but even his erotic attractiveness. 'However beautiful the face, one's eyes turn aside disgusted from a loafer.'

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[1] The Bison-horn Maria attribute this incident to a man named Baikesa and say that he himself cut off his long penis through shame when it touched a woman not his wife by mistake. He bled to death and was buried in a sitting posture. He is still honoured as Baikesa Pen with a pile of stones in many villages.

[2] But the Bison-horn Maria of Dugeli said that the penis became short because in olden times the Mahara had none at all and went to Gaja Bhimul to beg for one. He cut off the long part from the Maria, but they held the stones in their fists. This is why the Maria have nothing to do with the Mahara for fear they lose the rest of the organ.

[3] For this reason, it is said, the Bison-horn Maria pelt a girl with mud at her first menstruation.

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The Muria do not seem able to analyse a face and say whether, for example, thick lips or a snub nose is repugnant to them. I have often showed them the frontispiece of Grigson's *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which depicts a handsome Maria youth sitting with his wife. Everywhere the comment was the same; the couple had beautiful ornaments, but they were not sitting properly. Nothing was said about their features. And in fact, whenever I have discussed this subject, both chelik and motiari talk of the clothes and ornaments of a person rather than of feature or carriage. Here, for example, are some typical descriptions of attractive chelik given by motiari to my wife. 'He is always washing and doing his hair; his clothes are white and clean; he knows how to stand and sit [that is, he has good manners]. Even though he is thirty years old, we all love the Mansai, for he is never dirty.' That was in Palki; at Binjhli the favourite chelik was the Belumdar. 'He is of fair colour, his hair is curly, his face is always clean, he has beautiful ear-rings, his clothes are always white.' Not, it will be noted, 'he has beautiful ears' but 'he has beautiful ear-rings'. The Saliya of the same ghotul was also greatly admired; he was indeed a most handsome and charming youth. 'He is as clean as a State servant.'

In Markabera the motiari said: 'It's the ornaments that matter. It's the hair and the necklaces and the combs that matter. He must have all the ornaments, round his head, at his ears, about his neck, at his waist: how beautiful he looks then! He must have combs in his hair, and clean clothes. Let the nose be as it is, let the eyes be as they are, let the mouth be as it is; they were made by God and will be what they are. But we make the ornaments and with them a chelik can make himself as handsome as he wills.'

And indeed how handsome and delightful the chelik—especially the Jhoria chelik—can make themselves! When a boy is in love he borrows all he can, sticks feathers in his hair, covers himself with coloured beads, ties bunches of little bells at his waist. 'Then as he goes along, the bells jingle, and we motiari run out to see who is coming. "It's the Kotwar." "No, it's the Diwan." When she sees how beautiful he is, a motiari's mind rises for a boy.'

Nowhere do the chelik display their manly vigour, their agility, their sexual attractiveness to better advantage than in the Mandri dances. Some of the movements have a definitely sexual meaning, but all reveal the strength and energy of the drummers. It is said that the best lovers are those who use homemade wooden drums and not earthenware drums bought in the bazaar. It is considered that only a very ardent lover would go to the trouble of making a drum out of wood. 'Such men are strong and can break the horns of a deer.' Any girl will go to them rather than to those who are content with mere bazaar products. 'A chelik who can beat a wooden drum knows well how to beat a girl in love.'

In girls the chelik admire vitality and beauty, but expect them to be well-dressed and decorated. In Masora they said that the Malko was very pretty for 'she wears her cloth carefully, and always looks at her shadow to see if she is bearing herself well'. 'When we hear the *chatak-chatak* of a girl's anklets, we run to see who it is and whisper to each other, "Look, there she goes, how pretty she looks".' But they also expect a girl to be pretty in the Western and Hindu sense. I have noticed that the girls I myself thought worth photographing were those who received most attention from the chelik. The two favourite girls in Binjhli were the Silo and the Samaro; they were both small, slender, with rather delicate hands and feet, light-coloured, with bright attractive features, well-dressed hair ornamented with many combs, and plenty of necklaces. 'Their faces are always "ready" and their hair well-dressed.'

832 In Markabera the most beautiful girl was considered to be the Malko, whose photograph appears in Plate CXII. She won her fame, I think, by her vitality and carriage rather than for any loveliness of feature. The Kotwarin of Kachora, who was universally acclaimed as the most attractive girl there, and who may also be seen in Plate CXII,[1] could hardly be called beautiful. But she was bubbling over with life and energy, and her dancing was wonderful.

Other girls, very beautiful to Western eyes, whose photographs adorn this book, the Jhelo of Pupgaon, the Nero of Tarbaili, the Malko of Koilibera, the Salko of Munjmeta, were obviously the ruling queens of their youthful courts. I noticed that each of them was a vigorous and active worker, a fact that contributed not a little to the chelik's admiration.

In Kokori the Muria gave what is very rare, a detailed description of a beautiful girl.

> Her legs and feet should not be too long; they should be neither thin nor fat. The toes must not be big or crooked. She should have a slim waist so that when she ties her cloth round it, buttocks and waist will be level. A long stomach is ugly; so are buttocks that stick out behind. The nose may be small, but not snub. A big head or ears, or fat cheeks, are ugly. When the hair is combed it should lie flat on the head. A girl must not be very tall. Her eyes should not be black, and she should never put lamp-black in them or she would look like a witch. The most important thing is that she should dress well and work well. If a girl wears a good cloth she looks sweet, but with lots of ornaments she is entrancing. Even an ordinary girl can be beautiful with proper ornaments. But, however sweet her face may be, if she is idle or slovenly, we think her ugly.[2]

In the songs there are not so many references to feminine beauty as one would expect. Indeed many of the songs, being sung antiphonally between chelik and motiari, indulge in taunts rather than flattery. Thus Gadakare Mode of Lingo's ghotul hardly sounds attractive to modern ears. 'She had a navel as big as a cart-wheel and a wild boar could roll over and over in her vagina. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.' The chelik are often described in equally unflattering terms.

But the songs do sometimes make reference to a quality in woman which they call *sapota*, meaning that all her physical characters are balanced and in proportion. Such a girl is neither tall nor short, fat nor thin; 'she has a straight nose without too long a space between its tip and her lips; she has straight hands and feet, a slim waist, round breasts that are not too large. Her eyes are dark and bright'. The songs also refer to a type of girl they call *jalmalko*, which seems to describe the way a girl carries herself. 'She struts about like a peacock with tail erect'—many motiari resemble the male rather than the female bird. A Tutumri Pata refers to a girl as *jalkena naka jalkenaina*, one who goes swinging her hips to attract the eyes of men. A *kai chikan khosa*, a girl with hair parted and combed with care, is always beautiful.[3]

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[1] The caption in Plate CXII incorrectly gives this girl's village as Kongera.

[2] It will be of interest to compare these ideas with the estimate of classical Indian beauty made by Coomaraswamy. In the Rajasthani and Pahari paintings, he points out, are all the Hindu women-ideals, both physical and spiritual. 'The heroine's eyes are large as any lotus flowers, her tresses fall in heavy plaits, her breasts are firm and high, her thighs are full and smooth, her hands like rosy flowers, her gait as dignified as any elephant's and her demeanour utterly demure.'—A. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1916), p. 8.

[3] Trench gives the expression *singri-mingri* for a well-dressed and ornamented girl; *hommana* means 'pretty' and *sebbo* 'buxom'. Mitchell gives *ushena-karna* as meaning

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Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

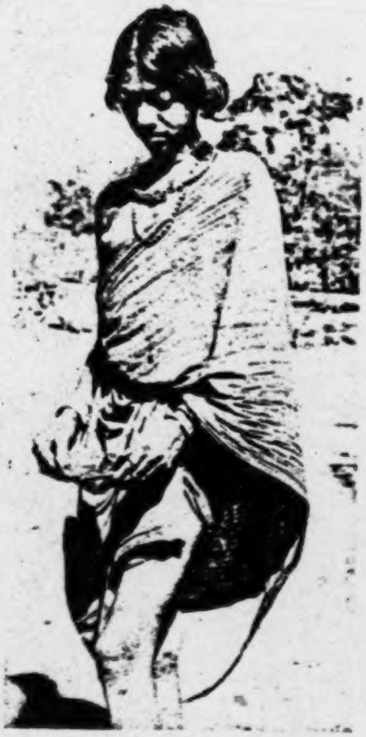

Plate LXXXVII

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Pola festival earthen bullocks put on the roof for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

Plate LXXXVIII

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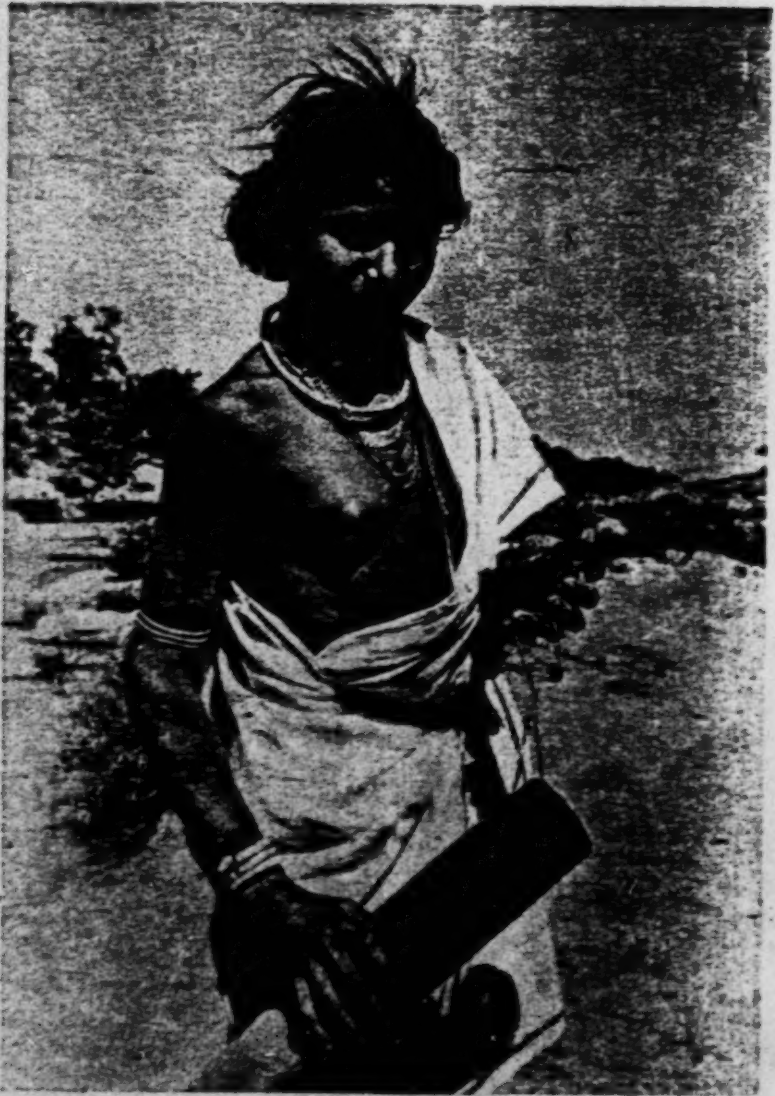

The Nero of Tarbaili with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(b)]

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832 Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, 826 they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress [833] demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *paras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-kukk dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *kosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *urang haskle dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pegs'; the *hapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *hindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *miral dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *korbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *hind dhati dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *kalta dudo*, the *harpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong atkag*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Siko-arjili* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bohril koraingne* mai is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *hilkor* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *opo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bison-horn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 38. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their [illegible]; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast; the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

832 It is possible for an unattractive motiari to make herself beautiful by magic. She must go all alone in the middle of the night and fetch home the charred bone of a barren witch who has died on a Sunday and has been cremated on the same day. She must then sacrifice a chicken before the bone on seven successive Sundays, saying 'I have brought you to make me beautiful'. On the seventh Sunday she touches every part of her body with the bone 'and her beauty then knows no bounds'. It is not surprising that the majority of girls prefer to leave their natural charms as they are.

IV. The Approach to Tumescence

X883 832 Contrary to what the Peeping Tom, be he chaprasi or social reformer, supposes, the real difficulty of ghotul life is not an excess of libido, but a deficiency that might well wreck it. For the essence of such a life is that it should be, as Milton defined poetry, 'simple, sensuous and passionate', that it should be redeemed from mediocrity and degradation by enthusiasm and a fine sexual vitality. But not only does Muria libido appear to be generally rather weak, but the special conditions of life in the ghotul tend still further to depress it. On this point, Havelock Ellis has the final word.

> Courtship, he says, 'is the process by which powerful sensory stimuli proceeding from a person of the opposite sex gradually produce the physiological state of tumescence, with its psychic concomitant of love and desire, more or less necessary for mating to be effected. But between those who have been brought up together from childhood all the sensory stimuli of vision, hearing, and touch have been dulled by use, trained to the calm level of affection, and deprived of their potency to arouse the erethistic excitement which produces sexual tumescence.'[1]

Havelock Ellis is here discussing the origin of the horror of incest, and arguing against Westermarck's theory of a special instinct that makes sexual intercourse between near kin an impossibility. But his words are equally applicable to the ghotul, where boys and girls grow up together under conditions of far greater intimacy than do most brothers and sisters. Chelik and motiari, like brothers and sisters, 'in relation to each other have at puberty already reached that state to which old married couples by the exhaustion of youthful passion and the slow usage of daily life gradually approximate'.[2] This would, of course, be somewhat overstated as applied to the ghotul, but it is not altogether wide of the truth. In any one ghotul the boys and girls have lived

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p. 147): Chaucer describes a beautiful woman 'with buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye'; the *Song of Songs*, through the Authorized Version, popularized among English readers two lovely similes—'Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies'; 'Thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine'—echoed by Sidney with his 'O breast in which two white sheep swell in pride'. Wycherley (*The Country Wife*) uses the orange simile, but a modern poet, Dylan Thomas, speaks, less romantically, of 'bagpipe-breasted ladies'. We must be content with one more comparison from a Lao poem, translated by E. Powys Mathers.

> Whether the breasts be as slight as citrons
> We would make love,
> Whether the breasts be as great as pumpkins
> As wrinkled as elephants,
> As soft as cooked rice.

See also Verrier Elwin, *Folk-songs of Chhattisgarh* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 38ff.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 206f. Compare Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 190ff.

[2] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., p. 206.

together all their lives and their capacity for erethistic excitement is naturally dulled.

But the Muria have the wit to put this fact to the best of uses and yet preserve their psychic capacity for sexual happiness. The calm level of affection—almost as of mature experience—which they achieve while yet in their teens, expresses itself in the wonderful harmony and fellowship of the best ghotul, the general diffused affection which leaves no room for jealousy and possessiveness. As anyone who has stayed for a time in a good ghotul must notice, the boys and girls form a compact, loyal, friendly little republic; they are all evidently very fond of each other; there is a large, generous, corporate romance, uniting them. They do really seem to live in a sort of glow; the superb light of cleopatrine passion is absent, but so is the harsher glare of excited grasping lust. In the soft diffused glow of corporate affection, a girl decorates herself not only for one boy, but for all the boys and for the ghotul's honour and delight. The boys drum and dance to please their special lovers, it is true, but also to excite and gratify the entire company of motiari.

But ideal as it may sound, such a situation has its dangers. A diffused affection does not promote sexual potency. And Muria, and indeed all aboriginal tradition, sets little value on unconsummated love. Without it there would be no harmony or content; everything would deviate. The very thing that the reformers and puritans most deplore in the ghotul is what keeps it clean and healthy. But to preserve this superbly natural life is not easy.

The ghotul routine might have been planned by some great erotic genius, so admirably is it devised to ensure tumescence whenever that may be desired. So apt is the ghotul method, so finely adapted to its purpose, so stimulating and tonic in its effect that were it possible to send jaded husbands and wives away from civilisation for treatment to the Muria, I do not believe one of them would return uncured.

'So far', says Havelock Ellis again, 'from the instinct of tumescence naturally needing to be crushed, it needs, on the contrary, in either sex to be submitted to the most elaborate and prolonged processes in order to bring about those conditions which detumescence relieves. A state of tumescence is not normally constant, and tumescence must be obtained before detumescence is possible. The whole object of courtship, of the mutual approximation and caresses of two persons of the opposite sex, is to create the state of sexual tumescence.'[1]

How then is tumescence achieved under the rather unfavourable circumstances of ghotul life? The buildings and surroundings of the dormitory are a powerful stimulant. These little huts, rich with tender and romantic association, the waving forest trees around, the stillness of the night, perhaps a moon, the bright fire in the courtyard, the tinkling bells tied to a chelik's waist, the distant song of motiari on their way—cannot fail to make the hearts of boy and girl beat faster.

The routine of a ghotul evening is a carefully devised preparation for intercourse, a tonic to deficient libido. First of all, the sense of touch is vividly stimulated by the combing and massaging. Havelock Ellis quotes Bain as saying that 'touch is both the alpha and omega of affection', and he stresses 'tenderness' as the characteristic 'quality of affection which is founded directly on sensations of touch'.[2] This exactly describes what I have often noticed about the motiari's technique of massage. Beginning with great vigour,

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[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*, p. 6.

X883 832 almost roughly, it grows gentler and gentler until at last the girl's hands are moving caressingly, tenderly over the arms and bodies of their boys, rousing affection and stirring with every gesture new desire.

The use of the comb to titillate the skin has a similar effect: Muria boys and girls are susceptible to tickling, which has been described as 'the most intellectual mode of touch sensation and that with the closest connexion with the sexual sphere'. As the motiari dresses her chelik's hair and with her comb gently tickles and stimulates his back and arms, he responds by fondling her breast, by stroking her legs (which are usually placed round his body; as she massages, the girl often grips the boy's waist between her knees) or by boldly tickling her. Certain types of massage are specially exciting. The girl stands above the boy, bending over him, and rubs downwards, passing her hands over the stomach down to the specifically erogenous region which thus receives a powerful tonic; sometimes she massages the legs, pushing her hands right up to the groin.

It is curious that with all this, the kiss as a means of sensory excitement is but little used.[1] It is not unknown—far from it—but it is something that goes in fashions; a ghotul discovers it, as at More Berma, and then everybody kisses. But even then the kiss does not appear to be on the lips, nor does the tongue play any part; for the Muria the kiss is a highly concentrated form of massage with the lips upon the skin. Boys kiss the face and breasts; I have never heard of *fellatio* being practised, but it may be—the description of it causes no offence.

After touch, smell is a powerful stimulant. Charming is the freshness of the open hill and forest, but more charming still, say the chelik, is the smell of perspiration, oil, wet earth, a suggestion of urine, all tempered by the bitter-sweet wood-smoke, which is regarded as the peculiar aroma of the ghotul.[2] The ghotul smell is unforgettable; it is not unpleasant even to a stranger's nostrils; and boys have told me that they have found it a strong sexual stimulant. 'The smell of the wood-smoke in a girl's hair, how exciting it is!' exclaimed a chelik at Markabera. So is the smell of the cow-shed clinging to boy or girl, a clean healthy smell with good associations. At Temrugaon the boys loved the scent of the marigolds that the motiari put in their hair and declared them to be their favourite flower.

[515] No artificial scents are used, and this means that both boys and girls have to be very careful about bodily cleanliness; an unpleasant vaginal odour is mentioned as specially inhibiting to desire; there is a saying—*muh sundri gānd gandri*—however beautiful the face, if a girl has a dirty body, she will not be admired.

X883 832 535 But 'the most usual method of attaining tumescence', says Havelock Ellis, 'a method found among the most various kinds of animals, from insects and birds to man—is some form of the dance'.[3] 'It is everywhere the instinctive object of the male, who is very rarely passive in the process of courtship, to assure by his activity in display, his energy or skill or beauty, both his own passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bendo pelo*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing, 883x 832 535

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[1] It is a commonplace of anthropology that primitive peoples do not kiss; I have always wondered how investigators can be so sure of this. The ordinary word in Gondi is *beriyāna*, 'to kiss'. Trench says that the word as used in Betul—*bervāna*—means 'to kiss, of humans, to nose, of dogs'. Ward gives *nakilla* as a Gondi word for kiss used in the Mandla District (*nākīna* means 'to lick'). I also found the Muria using a word *lovanda* which was said to mean 'kiss', but I am doubtful about this.

[2] The Uraon *dhumkuria* have a quite different smell, in which the odour of urine is much more prominent. The Bison-horn Maria again have a strong, and rather attractive, smell, not unlike the Savara but quite distinct from the Muria.

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.

Nān nān chingro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bara lām kānṭa,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihār Rāja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'? 883x 836 152

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up x883 836 152 and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

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[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 32. The sex-dance of the sub-human primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

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Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, bead-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

[831] Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

x883 836 Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

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of the seductive power of modesty. None of the evidence suggests that congress in the ghotul is readily achieved. It is not a place where girls are 'easy'; a chelik has no harder work than this.

A very important ghotul tradition is that a chelik must not rush a girl. It is considered improper to have intercourse with a motiari the first time you sleep with her—though doubtless there are offenders against this exacting code. A boy must approach a girl carefully and with respect; he must ensure that she is emotionally prepared for him; it is a sin to have intercourse before the girl is 'ready'. How many civilized people regulate their lives with such wisdom?

A chelik in Atargaon was in love with a girl for months, but she always repelled him. He took her to the Dhawadai bazaar and on the way begged her to be kind. She still refused, fearing he would make her pregnant. At last he gave her two bottles of liquor, and even then she only yielded when he solemnly swore to accept the responsibility if there was a child. A former Chalki of Telanga had a similar experience. He was in love with the girl he slept with, but she would never yield to him. He too took her to a bazaar and treated her to liquor and parched rice. She said, 'Your heart and mine are one; surely I will give you all you want. But now if I become pregnant, I shall have to carry a load that should be borne by two bullocks, not by one. If you promise to share the load, you can do what you will.' The Chalki promised; she gave herself to him; within a year she had conceived; and the boy kept his word and married her.

I will now quote a few documents, which are so much more valuable than general statements, about the immediate approach to intercourse. Each describes the first contact of the boy with that particular girl. At Munjmeta a chelik described how,

> If a peasant leaves his village and comes to another, his sons and daughters enter the new ghotul. If the new chelik can find a girl who has no partner [this is one of the ghotul where boys and girls are 'married'], he sleeps with her, taking her in his arms but doing no more. The next day he touches her breasts, and that day and the next he plays with her, tickling, stroking, fondling till he is sure she will not mind. She may still stop him doing anything for a day or two more. Then after a time, he excites her greatly; when all are asleep, he touches her knees, he pushes them a little; if she doesn't cry out, he opens them, he undoes her pubic cloth, and goes to her.

Another account comes from Kapsi, a beautiful village under the shadow of the Abujhmar Hills.

> We never try to have a girl the first day we sleep with her. We play with her first, and only when she is ready and excited do we go to her. It happens like this. After some days of sleeping together the chelik says to his motiari, 'We have slept together for such a long time now; won't you let me eat your tobacco?' The motiari replies, 'But I haven't any tobacco; how can I give you what I haven't got?' He says, 'O yes you have, only you're hiding it somewhere'. She says now, 'I've never done it; I don't know what to do'. If she goes on refusing, he gets angry and says, 'For so many days you have slept on my mat; you have warmed yourself with my blanket; I have given you combs and rings, and all the world knows I love you. But after tonight don't sleep with me again. My life is hurt. Yet for many days my life was in you.' Then he turns his back on her and pushes

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her off his mat. When that happens she soon becomes sorry and flings her arms round him saying, 'Why are you angry? We are always together; we will meet tomorrow'. Later, when all are asleep, she opens her cloth and lets him have his way.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just as it is the motiari who rule the sexual side and make the sleeping arrangements in the modern type of ghotul, so in both types it is the motiari who take the lead in actual congress. 'When a girl first goes to the ghotul,' said a motiari at Binjhli, 'she is sent to a chelik. She sits down by his mat and says, "Won't you give me a camping-site?" The chelik answers, "Lie down and sleep". The girl is always frightened at first, but she should make no fuss even if it hurts her, for then everyone would hear and laugh. A boy must never ask a girl to sleep with him. It is we who make the arrangements.' 'At first', I was told, 'it is the boy who is shy. But the first long steady look of the motiari encourages him, and afterwards he takes the lead.'

I will give finally a charming record, recorded at Phanda by Shamrao Hivale, of the way a chelik and motiari in love talk to one another.

'All day you were in my eyes,' says the chelik. 'You went to that village, and I kept on looking at it and saying to myself, "She is there".'

'Yes, I went away,' responds the motiari, 'but I felt as if you were just behind me. I could see your shadow by me all the time.'

'All day long I felt as if you were actually talking to me.'

'I said to myself, "Now the sun stands overhead; he must have returned from the jungle with his wood; perhaps he is resting, perhaps he is drinking his *jawa*".'

'I felt as if I should take you away, and talk to you alone, and never hear anyone else's voice again.'

'I never want to hear anyone else either.'

'Do you know what I did in the afternoon, when you had come home and then gone out fishing? I was ploughing, but I felt I must look at you, so I left my plough and hid under a bush by the river. There I could see you fishing and I felt very happy. After a little while I went back to my plough.'

VII. The Sexual Act

Kosra ke kote aaan Muria ke lote. As is the reaping of millet,
so is the intercourse of the Muria.—Muria proverb

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In the ghotul there is no ceremony of sexual initiation, no formal rite of defloration, no permission (save in a few ghotul) is needed from the leaders for the first or any other intercourse. 'Desire is not controlled by rules, nor is our copulation.'

From their earliest days in the ghotul the little chelik and motiari play together until gradually, imperceptibly the vaginal entrance is enlarged and the hymen disappears without a tear. 'We used to behave,' said Nari, 'exactly like little bulls and cows, sporting together till the bull could penetrate.' 'When you sleep with a girl night after night,' said the Antar of Jamkot, 'however small you may be, as long as flesh becomes wood, you try to beat her with it.' And the Budhker of Kapsi described how he quarrelled with his parents and eloped with his still immature wife. 'She was too young, and for a long time I only played with her and was quite happy with that till she was mature.'

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For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a 883x
motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when
you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of 833
water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness 836
in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen;
another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pale* (digging-stick) may get damaged.'

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but 883x
they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young
bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for 864
this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one
from Kapsi. 836

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised 883x
by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life.
Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed 836
that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region'
rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous inter- 833
ference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline.

x883 836 Naturally there are many breaches of the rule; at marriages and festivals, on dancing expeditions and during everyday work in field and forest, chelik and motiari unite in intercourse—but this is regarded as irregular, not exactly condemned, but accepted as outside the routine.

833 This fact alone is sufficient to make the ghotul tradition almost unique. For here is a company of boys and girls, many of them close relatives, who perform the sexual act in public, often in a single room. For it is public, even though veiled by the mask of darkness and a convention that no one should watch his neighbour. In some of the bigger ghotul, of course, the boys and girls are able to thin out a little; they can scatter in the different huts; in the hot weather they can sleep out in the compound. But during a large part of the year chelik and motiari sleep together in one small smoky room. They do not care to leave the warmth and security of their cosy ghotul for the dangerous and inconvenient discomfort of field or jungle. So we find brothers performing the sexual act before their sisters, and elder brothers in the forbidden presence of their younger brothers' 'wives'. Sometimes they are so crowded together that they have great difficulty in achieving coitus without waking up their neighbours.

For this reason, because intercourse must be with all the secrecy possible, without display and without disturbance, the normal method of copulation inside the ghotul is not unlike the characteristic European method—the girl lies prone on her back, and the boy stretches himself upon her, forcing her legs apart and often raising them to place them round his thighs.

But when the lovers meet outside the ghotul, they are able to indulge more varied postures. At Jhakri the chelik knew of four—the girl prone on her back and the youth kneeling or squatting before her; both sitting and facing one another; the youth prone and fully extended above the girl who sometimes raises her legs and sometimes extends them; and both standing, the girl supported against a tree or wall. At Palari, a chelik said, 'Usually we lie flat, but when a boy is very happy he sits above her.'

x883 833 A former Sirdar of Singarpuri described the difference between intercourse with a motiari in a crowded ghotul and with one's own wife in a private room. 'To have a motiari is like living on borrowed money; you are always anxious, and afraid someone will notice what you're doing. But with your own wife at home, you can have her lying down, you can have her standing up, you can have her from the front, you can have her from behind. She is like a good crop which you can eat till you can eat no more.'

But copulation *a posteriori* is generally considered improper. There still linger stories probably imaginary, that the soldiers who raped Muria women during the Rebellion of 1911 took them in this way. There is a ribald story current in the Bara Dongar Pargana of a married couple who wearied of the constant publicity and monotony of intercourse in a crowded home.

> So one day the man took her to the jungle and said they would copulate like horses. He persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to become completely naked. He said, 'Now you lean forward and when I come to you from behind, making love-noises like a horse, you must kick me with one leg'. But they had both forgotten that she was wearing heavy anklets with sharp edges, and when she kicked, one of these cut his lip open, and it has not yet completely healed.

A more tragic, though equally ribald, tale comes from Gorma.

> A husband saw a pair of cranes copulating as he was going home drunk from the liquor-shop. He said in his mind, 'That's how I'll do it tonight'.

> So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death. 883x 833

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it. 883x 836 833

> They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*masti*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eho lela kesode raiyār ashe hong dayār*. When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

> I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpuri, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Antar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'. 831

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her 833

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[1] 'The folds of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirani*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1940), p. 22.

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the
833 mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me,
842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure,
833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous 834
testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband
does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this.

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological, as well as a physiological, 883x
purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily
make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken 833
up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return.

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual 883x
anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common
than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such 832
charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'.

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaits said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of *saras* cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

> girl you want with your left arm and she will follow you as a pig follows your excreta.

Here are some other charms.

> Go to the Siraha and ask his help. Beg some of the ashes of the incense he has offered to the gods and some blessed rice. When you get a chance give this to your girl to eat and she will never leave you.
>
> Catch a pair of sparrows and on a Sunday take them to a cross-roads and sacrifice them by cutting off their heads. Make two little holes in the ground side by side, put a head in each and cover them with earth. Leave them all night and the following morning go to examine them. If the female head has moved into the male hole, you will be successful. Now remove the heads and offer them liquor and a black chicken. Burn them and tie up the ashes in a bundle at your waist. Next Sunday, somehow or other touch your girl with the bundle without her knowing and she will come to you as the sparrow's head went to its mate.
>
> On a Saturday go to the jungle and invite a *kari-bhulan* shrub to help you by sprinkling rice and liquor over it. Go next day and dig it up. If the roots are stuck together, you will know that all will be well. Take the roots home and get some aromatic leaves. Promise a goat to Lingo if you succeed.[1] Fry the roots and the leaves together, pound them up and mix a little in your girl's food without her knowing.

A similar charm is made of parasites growing on the bhansuli, bantga, kolicha-buta, gawai and phunder trees. They are collected and burnt. A black chicken is killed and its blood dropped upon them with the words, 'I give thee life to win me such and such a girl'. Then the ashes are tied up and the girl is touched with them in the usual way.

In Kolur village there was a Muria who claims that the tobacco in his pouch is so full of love-charms that he can win any girl he wants with it.

Two special types of charm must be mentioned. In Padbera there are stones which represent historic Muria who died fighting. These stones are regarded as very potent and boys or girls scrape a little of the stone to make charms. Once the Munshi (Mainu Uika) of the Bakulwahi ghotul got a little of this stone and offered it rice and liquor saying, 'I have brought you a gift, fulfil my desire and I will give you yet more'. Then he gave the scrapings in some tobacco to the Jhalko and the girl became so entranced that she eloped with him and they were married.

A similar custom attaches to the stone remains of Neng Mudial, about whom the Muria tell a romantic story:

> Long ago there lived two brothers, Tande and Gunshi, at Chaurang village. Between them these two brothers had eight wives. They had an old servant called Neng Mudial. One night this old man by his love magic carried off all eight wives. He took them first to Kotpar village, then to a very beautiful spot near the junction of Bongapal, Badgai and Bandopal where he dug three tanks and prepared bricks to build a fort.
>
> Now when the brothers Tande and Gunshi awoke in the morning and found their wives and their servant missing, they were filled with fury

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[1] In Mandla, a lover promises a white goat to the Rai Linga Hill if his suit succeeds.

> and went out to find them. They searched for many days and at last when they were almost weary of their chase, they discovered Neng Mudial near the pile of bricks for the great fort he hoped to make. Neng Mudial was sitting at his food and asked them to wait a moment; he would discuss matters when he had finished. But they were so angry that they cut off his left hand. Then they threw him on the ground and cut off his testicles and penis. They threw the testicles to Chandabera, where they turned into stone and may still be seen. They threw his penis to Ban-Chapai and it is there to this day. The old man himself turned into a stone. Then the brothers found their wives and killed them all and returned sadly to Chaurang, where they died and are worshipped even now.[1] 883X 832

The cult of Neng Mudial is still maintained at Chandabera, Bandopal and Bongapal, and annual offerings are made to his stones. The chelik believe that if after offering sacrifices they scrape a little from the stone testicle or penis and give it to their girls, these will be as certainly enticed as were the wives of Tande and Gunshi.

Closely allied to the use of love-charms is that of some sort of aphrodisiac. The Muria generally believe that a meat diet is useful for this, and especially the virile organs of the bear or goat.

It sometimes happens that when a motiari has succeeded in humbling a boy, taunted him with his lack of vigour and rather conspicuously bestowed her favours elsewhere, he wants to be revenged upon her. In order to do this, he prepares a very powerful tonic according to this prescription:

> Find a two- or three-year-old *dodha* cucumber plant with a parasite on it. Climb up without throwing your shadow on it and pick a bit without using your nails. Burn it and tie the ashes in a little bundle. Keep it in the house where the shadow of a menstruous woman or witch will not fall on it. Then at the time of intercourse tie it on your wrist or elbow and your thing will be as large as the cucumber and you can humble any girl who has scorned you.

An interesting use of a love-charm was recorded at Kabonga. The Sirdar told us that shortly after marriage, he was planning to elope with the Salki whom he had loved as a chelik. 'But my wife made a love-charm, and I fell in love with my own wife, and forgot the Salki.'

IX. IMPOTENCE

Stekel begins his great work on *Impotence in the Male* with a solemn warning. 'In men love-inadequacy is increasing to an alarming degree, and impotence has come to be a disorder associated with modern civilization . . . The percentage of relatively impotent men cannot be placed too high. In my experience, hardly half of all civilized men enjoy normal potency. Nowadays ejaculatio praecox is no longer a disorder; it is the regular accompaniment of civilization.'[2] Among the Muria, however, cases of impotence of any kind are extremely rare. It is, I think, possible to affirm this with confidence, 883X 833

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[1] For a somewhat similar legend of Nakti turned into stone, cf. *JBORS*, Vol. II, p. 214.

[2] W. Stekel, *Impotence in the Male* (English Translation, New York, 1939), p. 1. Compare also Dickinson's judgement. 'Our most grievous male problem of maladjustment is premature ejaculation and it is only second in disastrous effect to blundering technique'. —R. L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy* (London and Baltimore, 1933), p. 82.

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833 because nobody has any reticence in discussing the subject. It is in fact one of the things the people rather enjoy telling you, it is something unusual and interesting—a rather cruel joke, but still a joke. Out of 2000 married men, only 3 were absolutely impotent and only 9 relatively impotent—these admitted that their wives had betrayed them because 'they could not satisfy them', almost certainly a reference to ejaculatio praecox.

In view of this it is strange to read in Stekel: 'One may attempt to solve this question by studying the erotic life of primitive races. It is erroneous to think that primitive peoples experience a richer sexuality and possess a stronger sexual appetite than civilized man. On the contrary, exhaustive research proves that sexuality in primitive races is subject to numerous limitations and reveals a more rut-like (periodic) character. Their erotic life is poor in comparison with the ecstasies of civilized man. The psychic component of love is almost unknown to them.' When we turn to the footnote to see what Stekel means by 'exhaustive research' we find references to only two books—Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and Buschan's *Die geschlechtlichen Ausserungen der Naturvolker im Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften*. As a matter of fact, there has hardly been any research at all, let alone any 'exhaustive research', into the sexual life of primitive man. Such intimate knowledge as we have is far from supporting Stekel's generalizations, which appear to be based on the opinions of missionaries, officials and travellers, the most untrustworthy of all informants.

Muria libido, I agree, is somewhat weak, but since Muria institutions are well adapted to correct this deficiency, the matter is of little practical importance. The essential point remains. Out of 2000 marriages, only 12 were ruined by impotence. Had they been in civilization, according to Stekel the figure might have been in the neighbourhood of 1000.

In Muria society impotence is rare as a fact; it is very comomn as an accusation. This will account for the comparatively large vocabulary of terms, mainly Halbi and Chhattisgarhi, used to describe it, for to a Muria girl a sexual failure of twenty-four hours merits the charge. The words, however, are not really very unkind or scornful. *Terwa* means 'crooked', *thotha* means 'blunt', *baila* means 'a bullock' and, after all, a bullock is a very useful animal. Other words are *harba* (small), *lerga* (crooked) and *murda* (a corpse). *Thāt ni ute* means that 'the cart pole does not rise into position'. The only Gondi word for this condition is the interesting *doko*, which is a negative form of *dokāna* or *tokāna*, meaning 'to peck'. This word is often used of chickens which refuse to eat consecrated rice at a festival and *doko*, therefore, seems to imply the inability to peck at one's proper food. The fact that only one of these expressions is in Gondi still further emphasizes the absence of impotence among the unsophisticated aboriginals. Moreover the rather tolerant attitude implied in these terms of abuse suggests that the condition is sufficiently rare for no one to trouble himself very much about it.

In the ghotul, however, an impotent boy may have rather a bad time. 'God was making a woman but forgot what he was doing and stuck a bit of skin by mistake in front of the corpse,' said one pert motiari at Binjhli. 'If I were a man and like that, I would drown myself in the river,' said another. 'She is angry, for he keeps her dry as ashes: if he says a word, she is on fire.' 'A tree cannot grow without water, nor can love.' I have given at the beginning of this chapter the remarkable document that was recorded at Palli in which a girl who was unfortunate enough to be married to an impotent youth expressed her feelings. I have a taunt song on similar lines from Chikhli.

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Here's a twig of the ebony tree,
Here's the twig you were telling me of. 883x
No one can use it at either end. 833
I have offered water in a brass pot,
I have offered gruel in a leaf-cup, 539
I have served him rice in a dish,
I have given him curry in a leaf-cup,
But he does not speak to me.
He doesn't know what to do.
I cannot live just looking at his house,
I cannot live just to fill my belly.
I can only live if my heart is filled.
I will go away to my father's house.
How can I live so long without my proper work?

The symbols in this song are sexual. The brass pot, the leaf-cup, the dish offered by the girl to her husband, and his useless toilet-twig are recognized symbols of the female and male genitalia. In the concluding lines the girl declares, as she did at Palli, that life is something more than just looking after a house or filling one's stomach with food. The word in the eighth line which I have translated 'He does not speak to me' also means 'He does not have intercourse with me' and thus gives the key to the whole song.

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An impotent chelik's life in the ghotul is not altogether intolerable, for there are nearly always more boys than girls, and it does not matter very much if one of them has to sleep alone. But once the boy has got married, his position becomes desperate. A former Kotwar of the Kapsi ghotul was impotent. To cover his embarrassment he used to leave his wife at home and go to sleep in the ghotul. Naturally he was not very popular there, and after a time the motiari began to try to turn him out. They escorted him dancing and singing home to his wife, made him take her by the hand and said to her, 'Here's your husband. Sleep with him, beat him, do something with him; we don't want him in our ghotul'. Then they took a chicken from the house and went away, thus suggesting that they had again performed the final marriage rite when bride and bridegroom are put to bed together. After this had happened two or three times, the unfortunate youth gave up going to the ghotul—for he could not afford the continual loss of chickens—and went to sleep in any empty verandah or disused shed.

Boys who are married to older girls are accused by their wives of sexual inadequacy. A boy at Jamkot said, 'My wife was much older; how could my little penis please her? She used to go to her mother's house, and when I went to fetch her back, would say, "Do you think I can be happy sleeping with your pots and dishes? I want a man to live with".' At Karanji, the Mukhwan was also married to an older girl. 'My first wife was always dissatisfied because of my small penis. She used to leave me at home and go to dance the Chait Parab dances, for she came from the lowlands, and loved them. At last she met a man there who could please her, and left me. But my next wife was very happy.'

Such impotence is, of course, merely a symptom of immaturity. So also may be the cases reported of chelik who, though fully potent in the ghotul, find themselves impotent with their wives. This is usually attributed to a jealous motiari who resents her chelik being married to someone else. Ghasia, a very old Muria of Gerha, recalls how in his youth the Piosa of the ghotul was in love with him, and when he refused to marry her, made him impotent

X883 833 by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodiddr*), and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

839 'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairkuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

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[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 55.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bata who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

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The Gondi words used to describe masturbation, *bonde karsāna* for the male, *penda karsāna* for the female, meaning 'penis game' and 'vagina sport', do not suggest any high degree of social condemnation. *Bonde karsāna* is in contrast to *bonde endanna*, the 'penis dance'; as I show elsewhere, *karsāna* and *endanna* do not differ so much in form as in occasion. *Bonde karsāna* then is the satisfaction gained out of due order, in the wrong way perhaps, yet only a game. *Bonde endanna* is the legitimate, sanctioned, dutiful performance of the penis on the dancing-ground of the vagina at the festival of sex. Sex is a holy thing, a marriage or a festival, and you do not play games at a festival. 839

Homosexual practices are very rare. There is the usual coarse play among boys; they catch hold of each others' genitals; they sometimes ride on each other in imitation of the normal sexual act; in Nayanar little boys were taught to massage the legs of their elders. There was a story in Dongrigura of two chelik who practised mutual masturbation, and in the same ghotul two little girls were caught 'lying together like man and wife'. Boys often embrace, sit in one another's arms, sleep together on their narrow mats under a single blanket—but this is all part of the general affection and intimacy of ghotul life. An experienced police official has told me that he has never known a case of sodomy from the ghotul, and the jail authorities in Jagdalpur, some of whom have had from twenty to thirty years' experience, say that homosexual interests are never manifested by the aboriginal prisoners.[1] 838

Erotic zoophilia is less common, as we might expect, than among other peasants, for at least in its more bestial forms it is, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the sexual anomaly of dull, insensitive and unfastidious peasants ... the vice of the clod-hopper who is unattractive to women or inapt to court them'.[2] But the chelik are not dull, insensitive and unfastidious, still less are they inapt to court women. Both boys and girls, however, enjoy the mixoscopic aspect of zoophilia, though Bindo's statement that 'fish copulate like snakes, winding round each other' does not seem to reveal very accurate observation. The chelik often dress up as animals and simulate their copulation. 839

There is no specific word in Gondi for bestiality, which is regarded as ludicrous and unnecessary rather than repulsive. Like all deviations, it is supposed to belong to the civilized world rather than to the Muria Raj. The chelik recall how it was a Gond of Kanera who was jailed for going to a she-goat and a Rawat of Bayanar who was caught with his cow. At Ulera they talk about a Ganda who went to his mare. Members of these castes can hardly perhaps be called 'civilized', but the Muria regard them as Hindus and representative of a different culture.

Allen points out that 'many animals are unsuitable for sexual approach except sadistic ones, but no doubt whole hecatombs of animals have perished for this reason'.[3] The Muria are kind and gentle to animals, though a drunken priest may sacrifice a pig or cock with some cruelty.

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behaviour began after a time and developed in proportion to the period of segregation. M. Jenkins, *Genetic Psychological Monographs* (London, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 457ff.

[1] Writing of the Ho, Majumdar has suggested that their low fertility rate may be due to sterility induced by a 'homosexual fixation'. 'The institution of village dormitories definitely fosters homosexuality. There is a system of fagging in these dormitories. The smaller boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, comb their hair, and play the part of girls.'—D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 72. Unfortunately we know nothing about the Ho dormitories, and without knowing Majumdar's evidence, which he does not present, it is difficult to discuss his suggestion. But from a very brief investigation, it was evident that in the Ho dormitories the girls were segregated, and there is thus a different situation from that in Bastar.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (London, 1934), p. 154.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 85.

839 674 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. CEREMONIAL CROSS-DRESSING

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency: sometimes it is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1] 838

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[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

[3] E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 318ff.

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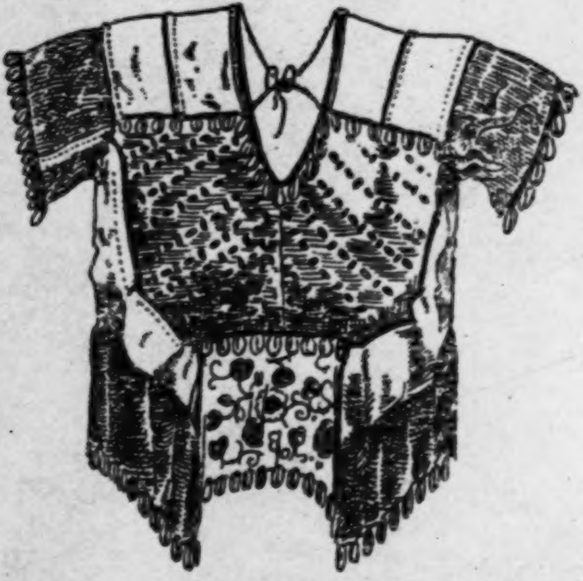

FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes 838
put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in 787
trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-
festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a 292
state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured
and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar 838
put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men.
Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at 796
the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which pre-
cedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, 292
and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a
ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual
harvest.[2]

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[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 3ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

838 585 292 535 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nemuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 585 535 539 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo !	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo !	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wāyār haiyu wāyu roy dewo !	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling cho gorāng roy dewo.	The mandia is like soura fruit.
Gorāng nori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

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men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 15–17.

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Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Hirpong ichah wejing roy dewo.	The rice is like chips of wood.
Wejong usi ola roy dewo.	She went to husk the rice.
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Perke pila wāterom dewo,	She went with her baby on her back,
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!

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The next song is about the girls' disguise. The bridegroom cannot recognize the bride now, but he will recognize her all too well when the marriage is consummated.

Burga chodi leyor.	The boy is getting old.
Bāba kohore hore!	
Nandy leyor inior.	Yet he calls himself a youth.
Leyāh ondah hitor,	He collects the young girls,
Leyah talla hewong.	He won't let them go.
Murka portāna inior.	He calls himself an orphan.
Ona chode māyrwār	He says he'll see what happens
Māma here māyer.	If we come near.
Māke ise wariyānior.	He frightens us away.
Dulhin chinha māyor,	He can't recognize the bride,
Muināh chinha māmior	But he'll know her tonight
Leyor ise āiah.	If he really is a youth.
Wāsi muthha hewer.	We are going to hit him.
Nāwāy āri iner.	He says, 'This is my wife'.
Bāba kohore hore!	

The next song explains itself. It must be remembered that each of these songs is being sung by girls led by the bride herself who insists over and over again that she is a boy.

Mutha hilāy wāl iona,	I come to beat him,
Nana jhoriyān leyor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Nāke hurse wariatu,	Seeing me he is afraid,
Nana jhoriyān leyor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Pichli tangiya kānj tona,	I have a small axe on my shoulder,
Nana jhoriyān leyor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Kariya koi hariana,	I am wearing a black coat,
Nana jhoriyān leyor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Manda hoi wānsiona,	I have come to clean the marriage-booth,
Nana jhoriyān leyor.	I am the Jhoria boy.

Another song seems simply to describe the various clothes and ornaments that the girls are wearing:

Age baga dāng paraing saiya sona?	Whence is the drum that sounds so bravely?
Arra nāling paraing saiya sona.	From Arra comes the drum.
Age baga dāng hundring saiya sona?	Whence is the *hundring* that sounds so well?
Kohka nāling hundring saiya sona.	From Kohka comes the *hundring*.
Age baga dāng chitkaring saiya sona?	Whence are the cymbals that clash so loudly?
Garwa kaiyadāng chitkaring saiya sona.	The blacksmith made the cymbals.

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Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gāndon kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dāng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadāng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dāng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gāto tinwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poywāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dehwāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tendwāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudete bonde nehyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna teks bura mihachwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can he be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

838 171 182 Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

single solution would apply to all the cases.'[1] He has suggested that the custom of the bride dressing as a male may be a magical means of ensur-

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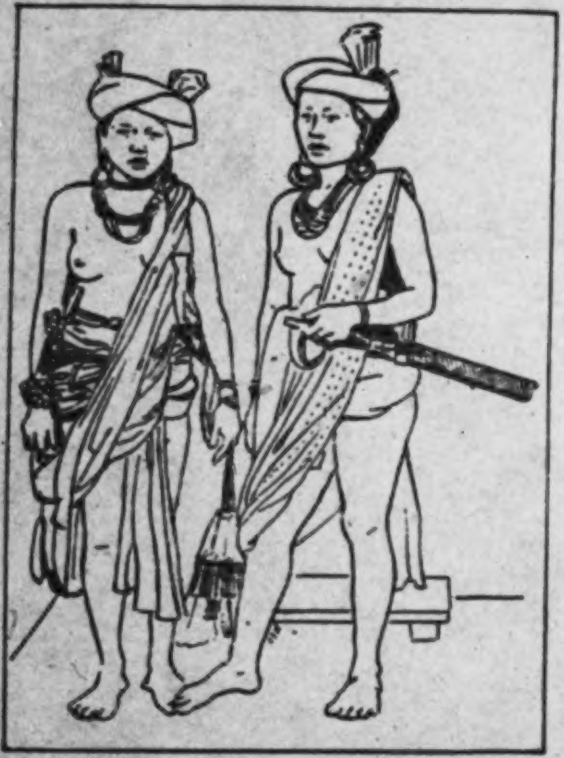

From a photograph in *Natural Man* by Charles Hose, by kind permission of the publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd

FIG. 116. Klemantan women dressed as men

ing a male heir. Certainly it is possible that cross-dressing has something to do with fertility. In Sarawak the Klemantan women dance in turbans and a sort of dhoti at a harvest festival which has been described as 'a celebration or cult of the principle of fertility and vitality—that of the women no less than that of the rice grain'.[2] Zulu women dress in men's clothes and go to herd their cattle to save them from disease.[3] Crawley refers to a custom of the Nguela of Assam when men dressed as women dance in honour of the children

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[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1911–15), Vol. VI, p. 260. See also J. Abercromby, 'An Amazonian Custom in the Caucasus', *Folk-Lore*, Vol. II (1891), pp. 171ff.

[2] Hose, *Natural Man* (London, 1926), p. 128. Hose gives a charming photograph, upon which Fig. 116 is based.

[3] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 320.

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born during the year.[1] In the Mandla District of the Central Provinces of India, Gond and Baiga women from time to time dress up as men and go from village to village with spears and axes on a sort of ceremonial hunt. In each place they catch and kill a pig, an act normally taboo to women. That this is a fertility rite is indicated partly by the fact that it is practised in times of dearth and also by the songs used for the occasion. One of these is as follows:

Kutki kodon ke bharti hoe!	May kutki and kodon increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!
Gai garua ke bharti hoe!	May cows and cattle increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!

This is called Stiria-raj[2]; the custom is also known among the Maria and Muria. At Toskapal I was told how women made moustaches of lamp-black, put on dhoti and turban and went armed from place to place sacrificing goats and pigs. Kond women also dress as men and sacrifice fowls.

Frazer again suggested that the wife wears husband's garments in order to transfer to him her future pains at child-birth.[3] But there is no tradition of the couvade among the Muria, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the young bride will already be so anxious about her pains as to wish to be rid of them even on her marriage day.

Another suggestion is that the marriage disguise is aimed at averting danger from the evil eye at a moment when the bride is particularly susceptible to the influence of hostile magic.[4] The marriage disguise has been noted for different peoples in Africa and India as well as in antiquity; sometimes it is carried so far as to substitute a mock bride for the real one. This was the view of Crooke,[5] after a survey of the Indian evidence, and the final opinion of Frazer.[6] Westermarck, however, who gives many examples of the marriage disguise, doubts whether all these practices can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. 'Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr Crawley's theory of "inoculation", according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person", and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralizing that danger'.[7]

But the Muria practice of not only disguising the bride, but also her companions, so that not even the husband can tell which is which, does appear to aim in some way at averting hostile magic or the enmity of the dead or evil spirits.

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[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 103.

[2] There was a similar custom among the Kol. 'In October, 1880,' says Halder, 'I witnessed at Ranchi a curious sight of bands of Munda girls, wearing turbans, going about in procession armed with sticks, spears and axes. All the girls of a village so equip themselves and make a descent upon the next village to the east, carrying off whatever fowls, kids, pigs, and lambs they can secure. The village thus devastated takes its chance by sending a similar expedition of Amazons to the next village eastwards and so on. Retaliation is forbidden, nor is any resistance offered; and, moreover, it is quite legitimate for the invaders to seek their booty wherever they may be concealed. This festival, called *Jani-sikar*, takes place once every twelve years, and is supposed to have been started by a Raja of the Nag-bansi family, named Ganes Sahi, in the twelfth year of his reign.'—S. Halder, 'A Curious Kol Festival', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. III, p. 216.

[4] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 49ff. and 318ff.

[5] Crooke, op. cit., p. 8.

[6] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 235ff.

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, pp. 318ff.

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In an interesting account of the women's hunt in the Ranchi District of Chota Nagpur, W. G. Archer has traced the mythological basis of the custom, but he points out that it also fulfils a psychological need. 'We shall only be grasping its real value if we regard it not as fact but as poetry, as the expression of a need rather than a statement of a truth.'

> This need may be defined as follows. In Uraon society, the principles of succession are male, the method of government is male, the salient offices are male. The men are by convention and tradition the social superiors of the women. But if this is the convention, it is only partly the fact. In Uraon villages, the actual relation is one of equality. It is as equals that the men and women dance. It is as equals that a wife and her husband order their family affairs. And it is as equals that they work and live together. There is thus a stress between the formal structure of tribal-life and the actual feelings and emotions that thrust upon it. To relieve this stress is the function of the hunt and the myth.
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> The myth shows that although the men may rule, it is the women who are also men. In its reliance on the success of a simple trick, it expresses Uraon pleasure in naive cleverness and under this typically Uraon cover, it mildly pokes fun at male incompetence. The balance is therefore righted. The women are recognized to be the equals of men.[1]

It is possible that we may have to connect the custom very deep down with the same tendency that has produced the eonist deviation. The last Jhoria songs that I have quoted give some point to the supposition that cross-dressing is an expression of 'penis-envy'. I have only given two songs of this nature, but there are many on the same lines which suggest that for once the motiari are able to assert themselves against the chelik who so constantly establish their sexual domination in normal times.

Probably several different reasons have combined to produce the rite. The Muria girls dance disguised at the marriage partly to protect the bride, partly to avert hostile magic or the evil eye, partly to restore the sexual balance of the tribe and partly too, simply because they love dressing up and get a lot of fun out of it. It is very amusing to see the unfortunate bridegroom trying to guess which of the many girls before him, all looking exactly alike, is his own wife. If he chooses the wrong girl everyone is delighted; when the right girl darts out of the group and beats him it is an occasion not to be forgotten.

But such cross-dressing is always ceremonial. There are strict taboos on men and women wearing each other's clothes on ordinary occasions, and this makes the rite, when it does occur, all the more exciting and impressive.[2]

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[1] W. G. Archer, 'The Women's Hunt' in *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (1942), pp. 187ff. The same feeling is revealed in the widespread myth of the Island and Country of Women, which goes back to the *Mahabharata* and was recorded by Hiuen Tsang. For an account of this interesting subject and full references to the literature, see W. Crooke, 'The Land and Island of Women', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1942), pp. 210ff; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 263 and my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] In an account of prophylactic disguises for averting evil in the Bombay Presidency, J. J. Modi gives three types of sex disguise—

(1) Proclaiming the birth of a boy as that of a girl.
(2) Perforating the nose or the ear of a boy like a girl's.
(3) Allowing the growth of long hair in a boy so as to make him appear like a girl.

See J. J. Modi, 'Prophylactic Disguise for Averting Evil', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 16ff.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

XII. FRIENDSHIPS

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The 'official' friendships which are such a common feature of the social life of many castes and tribes in the Central Provinces and Chota Nagpur are not popular among the Muria. This *bode-hiyāna* (friendship-making) is regarded as a Hindu custom and throughout the Jhoria country is practically unknown. In the Kondagaon Tahsil, especially in villages along the main road and in parts of the Bara Dongar Pargana, such friendships are indeed made, but do not play a very important part in the ghotul or in village life.

As in the Central Provinces, when these ceremonial friendships are instituted, the parties to them henceforth stand together and help each other in a very special way.[1]

Dalton says the ties 'are almost as binding as those of marriage'.[2] The parties may not address each other by their ordinary names, though they may continue to use their ghotul titles. Such friendships can only be made between people who are *akomāma* to one another. In certain cases boys and girls can make these friendships with each other, though they are much more common between members of the same sex.

In Bastar the best-known friendships are the *keonra-phul*, the *supāri-phul*, the *sakhi* and the *baru*. I have not found the *jawāra* friendship, though I have occasionally heard of the *gangājal* and *bhajli*. It is said that the *keonra-phul* is made between men and women who stand in a joking relationship to each other as, for example, between a man and his elder brother's wife. A girl often becomes *sakhi* to her father's brother's wife. Boys and girls can be *baru* to each other and there is a line in a song which suggests that they can also become *jai-mongra-phul*:

> He asked me to be his *jai-mongra* flower-friend, mother;
> But I am too shy to be that, mother.

These friendships are initiated by a simple ceremony in the ghotul. Two leaf-cups are made and little lamps are placed in them and lit. The friends wash each other's feet, stand face to face, put flowers behind each other's ears, exchange three times shoots of grain, *supāri*-nut, a little sand or whatever it may be, embrace and greet each other by their new names and salute everyone who is there. They then distribute coconut and liquor.

I have not found many examples of this charming and natural practice. There were such alliances in Binjhli and Alor. At Sidhawand, Pilsai had a *keonra-phul* in the Sirdar and at Masora Phirtu had a friend of the same

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[1] This system of friendships in Chota Nagpur and Orissa has been described by Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, pp. 235ff.; *The Kharias*, p. 162; *The Birhors*, pp. 527ff.; *The Oraons*, pp. 396ff. Roy stresses the fact that the aboriginals generally form these alliances with members of other communities, thus indicating that the custom is a borrowed one. Certainly any elaboration seems to indicate external contact: thus the primitive Juang only have the Makro, Sangat and Phulo friendships, and do not take the names of flowers. The Dhurwa-Parja have the custom in a very simplified form. I have not found it at all among the Maria. See also Gordon, op. cit., p. 188, who remarks that after an acquaintance with the people of Bilaspur of fourteen years he 'can recall only one instance in which such a friendship was broken', and adds 'It has been hinted to me that these friendships sometimes result in a community of possessions extending even to a community of wives'. Firth has given an interesting account of such bond-friendships in Tikopia, which he considers 'less striking forms of covenant' than the blood-brotherhood of Africa, but which illustrate 'some aspects of the sociology of co-operation and the very real and immediate advantages of a psychological, economic and social kind which an institutionalized friendship provides, and the moral sanction which attaches to the performance of material, non-ritual services'.—R. Firth, 'Bond-Friendship in Tikopia', *Custom is King* (London, 1936), pp. 259ff.

[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 353.

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degree. It is worthy of remark that both these boys had been to school. At Sidhawand my wife and I became the *supāri-phul* and *sakhi* of Rame and Pilsai respectively. My *sakhi* certainly takes this friendship and its obligations very seriously indeed. In Sidhawand the Kotwar entered into the *bhoji* relationship with the Nirosa.

If the two friends are to sleep together in the ghotul—this is a Masora and Jamkot custom—they must place a piece of cloth between them. Otherwise 'to sleep together would be a sin'. I do not think we should read a very deep meaning into this; the rule is not intended to prevent homosexual practices which do not exist; the two friends are simply in a religious or magical state to one another.

But apart from such covenanted alliances, there are deep and lasting friendships between chelik and chelik, motiari and motiari, even though these have no formal name and are not officially recognized. But it seems to me that these tend to express themselves in gangs or groups rather than in pairs. The exclusive, passionate, devotion of two boys or two girls to each other would be contrary to the strongly communal nature of the ghotul and indeed of all Muria society.

So although the Padhar and Tahsildar (Pilsai) of the Sidhawand ghotul are *sāthi* (companions) who 'must always be together, must stand by one another, and feel miserable if they don't see each other', their attachment is not exclusive. The Sirdār is always with them, and the three boys sleep together with their motiari in a corner of the ghotul. Boys and girls group themselves according to age; the bigger motiari, who have to do so many things together, naturally spend most of their time together and become great friends. In Jhakri there were several groups of boys and they told us that they had their own secret language and could talk to each other and make jokes without the others knowing anything about it. 'When you are friends, you can all fart together', as one of them said. They would not even tell their secrets to the girls they loved. Even in the *jodidār* ghotul, such groups of boys are said to share their girls with one another, though not, of course, with anyone outside. But it is said that these friendships weaken after marriage, as the friends begin to 'tread the hill of the elders' and to suffer 'the cares of house and door'.

Two famous friends, who have continued to this day, are the former Atkari and Soha, Nari and Tota, of Nayanar, both men of outstanding character, witty, active, genial, popular. In their youth, both were fined for making their motiari, the Tilcka and the Manjaro, pregnant, and have thus borne ever since the name of *jataha*, a Gondi-Halbi word meaning someone 'who takes a thing by force'. They always slept on the same mat in the ghotul, back to back with their motiari on either side of them on separate mats. People talk also of the friendship between Rama, the Sirdar, and Sukder, the Likhen, of Palli. 'They never go anywhere alone; they are always together.'

But, on the whole, such devoted alliances and partnerships are rare. The reasons for this are many. There is, as I have said, the strongly communal and highly organized character of ghotul society. From childhood the Muria are trained to do things together, to move, work, mourn, rejoice as a group. Then there is the strong feeling against jealousy and anything that would promote jealousy. The habit of mind that forces a boy to sleep every night with a different motiari is not likely to encourage him to form an exclusive attachment to a member of his own sex, which would be likely to excite the jealousy of the others. In Alor, the villagers said of two great friends, older men, that 'those two always cut everything in pieces; they disturb the judgements of the panchayat'.

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Any form of partiality is resented by the Muria. We see this in the ghotul which dislikes even a hint of favouritism towards a boy or girl on account of the wealth or rank of the parents. It is the same among the elders. The panchayat, the village mind, must work dispassionately; intensity of personal relationships ruins fair judgement.

When I was discussing this question in Khutgaon, and asked why it was that in that (Kalpatti) pargana there were so few famous friendships, the answer came quite simply: 'Because we are more interested in girls.' Let the European reader of this book pause to reflect how much of his own youth was passed in exclusively male society, what the word 'dormitory' meant to him—as compared to what it means to a Muria!—and he will realize that the kind of friendship that was so important a part of his life at school or the university will obviously have little significance in Bastar.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

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RECENT controversies about the sex life of primitive peoples, which have centred mainly on such questions as the extent of their ignorance of physiological paternity and the pre-marital licence they permit, have tended to obscure the equally interesting and important problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity.

This problem, which arises in an acute form among the Muria, has often puzzled anthropologists. They have observed that many societies allow the unmarried complete freedom of sexual opportunity, that 'illegitimate' births are rare, but that after marriage the women generally prove remarkably fertile. It is to writers on the Pacific area that we are indebted for a clear statement of this problem. African observers have tried to find some solution in the contraceptive practices and restraints of their peoples and have generally, I think, evaded the main issue. In India there is little evidence of value to illustrate the sex life of its aboriginals. It is astonishing that none of the writers on the village dormitories or men's houses throughout the world have seriously tackled a question so fundamental to any discussion of the institutions they have described.

One of the first to draw attention to the question was Seligman, who wrote in 1910 that a puzzling feature of the licence undoubtedly permitted throughout the Massim area of British New Guinea was the very small number of illegitimate births which took place.

> Wherever the confidence of the natives was gained it was admitted that abortion was induced, but the most careful inquiries failed to produce evidence that the practice was as frequent as might be expected considering the prevailing liberty. In fact, with every *a priori* reason for expecting abortion to be commonly produced I came to the conclusion that in fact it was a somewhat infrequent event.[1]

Rivers noticed the same thing among the Eddystone Islanders.

> The very free relations existing before marriage might have been expected to lead to the birth of many children and to the existence of definite regulations for assigning such children to their proper place in society. Such births seemed, however, to be extremely rare, and in the whole of the pedigrees collected by us only one such case was given, and that many generations ago.[2]

Writing in *Oceania* on the culture of the people of Wogeo, one of the New Guinea islands, Hogbin says that,

> Single girls do sometimes have children, but illegitimacy is not nearly so common as one might have expected. Just why this is so it is impossible to say. I observed one fact that bears directly upon the problem, namely that it is extremely rare for women to have children until they are, I judge, more than twenty-one years of age, by which time most of them are safely married. I have noticed that even when a girl is married directly after her first menstruation, which does not

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[1] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 500.
[2] W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926), p. 76.

> regularly take place until almost certainly after the seventeenth year, it is most unusual for her to have a child for several years.[1]

Barton notes that in the Ifugao *agamang* 'conception results less frequently than one would expect. The surprising intensity of the sex life of the *agamang* period seems to create physiological conditions unfavourable to conception: possibly the excessive intercourse keeps the female organs in a state of hyperemia'.[2]

The classical statement of the problem is by Malinowski. In his great study of the Trobriand Islanders—who have in their *bukumatula* an institution for pre-marital congress not wholly unlike the ghotul—he says,

> Since there is so much sexual freedom, must there not be a great number of children born out of wedlock? If this is not so, what means of prevention do the natives possess?
>
> As to the first question, it is very remarkable to note that illegitimate children are rare. The girls seem to remain sterile throughout their period of licence, which begins when they are small children and continues till they marry; when they are married they conceive and breed, sometimes quite prolifically. I express myself cautiously about the number of illegitimate children, for in most cases there are special difficulties even in ascertaining the fact . . . so that only an approximate estimate can be made even in a community with which one is very well acquainted.
>
> I was able to find roughly a dozen illegitimate children recorded genealogically in the Trobriands, or about one per cent.[3]

Malinowski goes on to say that contraceptive methods are completely unknown in the Trobriands. Two years later Rentoul, in a communication to *Man*, declared that the Trobriand women were 'specially endowed or gifted with ejaculatory powers, which may be called upon after an act of coition to expel the male seed'.[4] Though Malinowski poured scorn on Rentoul's suggestion, describing it as 'one of the typical myths which circulate among the semi-educated white residents', Himes is not prepared to reject it altogether.

> What is undoubtedly the same technique, seminal expulsion by violent bodily movements, is reported as used by Australian natives. Therefore its occasional use by some Trobriand women is a possibility. Other circumstances being equal, a positive declaration of use seems more credible than a denial by natives in conversation with an anthropologist.[5]

Yet even if some of the Trobriand women do practise this means of contraception, as some of them undoubtedly limit the number of their offspring by abortion, the problem still remains—the extreme disparity between the extent of the sexual licence allowed and what is usually regarded as its inevitable sequence. Malinowski says again,

> Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual life young, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely? This, of course, cannot be answered here,

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[1] H. I. Hogbin, 'The Native Culture of Wogeo', *Oceania*, Vol. V (1935), pp. 320f.

[2] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), p. 11.

[3] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, third edition (London, 1932), pp. 166f.

[4] A. C. Rentoul, 'Physiological Paternity and the Trobrianders', *Man*, Vol. XXXI (1931), p. 153.

[5] N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (London, 1936), p. 33.

as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue.[1] 842 171

The problem thus posed presents itself in a peculiarly acute form when we consider conditions of life in the ghotul. For here, boys and girls—in spite of various checks and disciplines—cohabit from the period of their first tentative experiments, through full sexual maturity, for five to eight years until their freedom is ended by marriage. Yet here too pregnancies are comparatively rare and, though various contraceptive means are practised, few of them have physiological properties.

The incidence of pregnancy, however, is higher than that discovered by Malinowski in the Trobriands. Out of 2000 cases, 80 men admitted to having made their ghotul partners pregnant, and in the 220 ghotul examined, I found a history of 327 pregnant girls. 883x 842

848 I believe that these figures are reasonably accurate. Although there is a strict rule against any member of the ghotul revealing even to the elders of the tribe, let alone to an inquisitive outsider, the fact that a motiari is pregnant at the moment, this reticence is no check on the loquacity of older men about matters long since past. As we shall see, there is no moral or social stigma attaching to pre-marital pregnancy; it is rather a matter of business, a complicated financial transaction. Everyone in the ghotul hushes it up rather as one might hush up a friend's mistakes or follies, anxious only to get him off. But once it is all over, the bills paid, the girl married, the child accepted as a full member of its legal father's family and clan, the real father allows himself the pleasures of retrospection; he recalls the potency of former days and finds it not ungratifying to remember what a lad he was.

Eighty pregnancies out of 2000 is 4 per cent, much more than Malinowski's figure, astonishingly more than Rivers'—and this in spite of the fact that the Muria admit to contraceptive practices that are denied in the Trobriand and Eddystone Islands. It is possible that a statistical, instead of a genealogical, inquiry would have yielded higher figures, at least in the Eddystone Islands. The genealogical method is not the best way to discover 'illegitimate' births among primitive people, for the whole trend of primitive society is to legitimatise births wherever possible.

Yet although the older Muria are not unwilling to admit the scandals of long ago, it is regarded as vitally important for a Muria girl to avoid conception. Pre-nuptial intercourse is socially recognized, and even tacitly approved, yet pre-nuptial pregnancy is at the moment of its occurrence a major social disaster, the chief anxiety of ghotul life, the one cloud upon its dreamland. It brings disgrace upon the ghotul, it endangers the girl's normal marriage prospects, it imposes a heavy financial burden upon the boy's parents and it casts a momentary shadow over the whole village. It is sometimes believed that a youth who has 'wasted his seed'[2] in making a motiari pregnant will be sterile later in life. On joining the ghotul the little chelik and motiari are solemnly warned both by their parents and by the ghotul leaders of the risks of pregnancy and are told how to avoid it.

For the Muria have a vivid appreciation of the fact of physiological paternity. The answer to the riddle 'Out of water, bones' is 'Semen and a child'. 842

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[1] Malinowski, op. cit., p. 168.

[2] The expression used for a girl is *nas bigad gaya*, 'her nerve is broken', if she conceives out of due time.

842 Conception, they say, is due to 'the conflict of two waters'. 'It is a kind of urine that makes a baby.' 'The child is formed in the womb just like the chicken in the egg, first the white, then the yolk, then the bones and flesh, and at last the life.' But some Muria say that it is not possible to have any exact knowledge about the conception of a child. 'It is not as though we were just tying up a bundle and could say exactly what we had put inside it.'

But the place of the father, the male, in the procreative process is fully recognized in folk-tale, song and the talk of every day. The Muria even have their theories about the physiological conditions necessary for conception. The first and most important of these is that the climax of the male and female should occur simultaneously. If the woman reaches her climax before the man's orgasm, his seed will be destroyed by her discharge. If the woman fails to reach a climax at all, conception will not occur. The Muria illustrate this by pointing out that if rice is sown in too much water, or if the rainfall is excessive, the seed will rot and there will be no harvest. If there is no rain after the seed is sown, it will wither. For a good crop there must be moderate showers.

583 Chelik and motiari then are well aware that conception normally follows sexual congress—'If you excrete in a stream, the mess will rise to the surface';
842 they are strictly warned that conception must not occur; at the same time they are given every opportunity, and indeed encouragement, to copulate. It is evident, therefore, that they must at least believe—in spite of a 4 per cent figure to the contrary—that conception can be avoided. What methods are adopted to achieve this end?

The first, and possibly to the Muria mind the most important, is a supernatural one. The ghotul is protected by Lingo Pen and the Earth Mother. It is a shrine, a *thirtasthān*, as the more Hinduized Muria call it. Within its walls no sin can be committed. No evil dream can harm the sleepers; no hostile magic can draw near. Conception cannot occur within the ghotul walls; a pregnancy is believed to be the result of furtive extramural activity.

For three years after the menarche, say the Muria, Lingo Pen saves the motiari from conceiving. There must be centuries of observation behind this faith in a sterility interval. Prayers and offerings are made to ensure the god's protection.

When a girl at her first menstruation goes to bathe in the stream, she prays to the Nahani Kanyang (Bathing Maiden) saying, 'So long as I live in the ghotul, see that my blood flows by the moon, and that I do not conceive. If you grant my desire I will make you an offering at my wedding'. If the prayer is granted, the girl offers an egg, some coconuts, ornaments, a little slag from the smithy, rice and an sonra ring to the Kanyang. I am told that the motiari have a great faith in this prayer, which they believe has prevented thousands of conceptions.

Sometimes the girl offers to the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) the leaf-cup and plate from which she has eaten on the morning of the first day of her menarche, and prays, 'As you dance and play in the water, so let me dance and play. Let me not be pregnant till I am married, and on my wedding-day I will give you gifts'.

When a chelik and motiari fall in love with each other, especially if they belong to the type of ghotul that frowns upon such attachments and thus forces them to have congress outside its walls, they sometimes go to the jungle and, standing before a saja tree, offer an egg to Lingo Pen, saying, 'Protect us from scandal [that is, pregnancy]; if anyone's name is to be ruined, it will be yours and not ours'.[1]

A curious story comes from Aturbera. On the Tongar Mountain, the son of a Rau (hill-demon) died and that night there was a great wind and all the spirits wept. A chelik of the Uika clan heard the sound and its horror drove him mad. He went out onto the mountain-side and there in a high wind found the burning body of the Rau. He pulled the corpse from the flames and cut off its little finger. When he came to his senses he returned home, and put the Rau's finger in a hollow bamboo which he buried in front of the ghotul. Since then, it is said, no girl in that ghotul has ever become pregnant. At her menarche each motiari digs up the bamboo, removes a tiny scrap of the finger and offers it to the Rau saying, 'Let me not conceive'.

The chelik too are equally concerned to avoid the social and financial embarrassments of a conception for which they may be held responsible. At the Kokoko Festival, when the first patch of axe-cultivation is ceremonially fired, the Sirdar prays, 'Give us sound sleep with our motiari and let them not conceive'. This is how I heard them say it in Bandopal, and again a few days later I heard, at the same festival at Nayanar, the chelik pray, 'Give us daily congress with our motiari, sound sleep in the ghotul and let not the girls conceive'.

But the Muria do not rely entirely upon such supernatural contraceptives; they have faith also in physical means. They believe that the most favourable period for conception is immediately after the catamenial period; after the menstrual flow has stopped, a little blood remains in the vagina; this catches the seed and causes pregnancy. 'The woman's blood and water sucks at the man's water; she has been alone for days, now she is very excited; in this way conception occurs.'

Chelik and motiari must, therefore, avoid intercourse at this time. In most ghotul they are very strict about this. In some there is a rule that the girls should not come to sleep with the chelik till the sixth or seventh day. Even then it is the rule in Binjhli for boys to practise *coitus interruptus* on the seventh day, and a motiari is appointed to give the girls instructions to insist upon it. In other villages, although the girls may be allowed to return to the ghotul immediately after the close of the period, they are not permitted to sleep with the chelik, still less to have intercourse with them.

Another practical method of birth control is based on the belief that if a girl frequently changes her partners she is less likely to conceive. This idea, as we have seen, has led to far-reaching changes in the organization of the ghotul. The old rule of absolute fidelity to a single partner has been changed into one which forbids chelik and motiari to sleep together for more than three days at a time. A constant change of partners, it is believed, renders conception less likely.

Statistics, however, hardly bear this out. Of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in the *jodidār* ghotul and 1280 in ghotul where partners had to be changed. Of the 80 who made a girl pregnant during their ghotul period, only 25 were living in the *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 in the others, giving a figure of 1 pregnancy in 23·2 for the 'modern' ghotul and 1 in 28·8 for the *jodidār*, in exact contradiction of Muria tradition.

Members of the *jodidār* ghotul, however, say that they achieve some kind of limitation by 'spacing' their copulations. There is often a rule that the chelik

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[1] On the other hand, a jealous girl or boy watching a beloved in the arms of another may offer a little rice and an egg to the Departed in the name of Lingo saying, 'Let so-and-so become pregnant, and be forced to face the scandal of a panchayat inquiry'.

X 883 must not have intercourse with their 'wives' more than once or twice a week. They sleep together daily, but the ghotul leaders do not permit sexual congress; 842 in such a close-knit society, control is not difficult. It is interesting that the natural sequence of a 'scandal' is the adoption of a rule that the motiari must not stay in the ghotul all night, or that they may only remain there before festivals and marriages, or on certain days of the week. This indicates the Muria belief that by breaking up the cycle of intercourse, conception is less likely to occur.

The Muria believe strongly that conception cannot follow an act of casual intercourse. A woman must remain with the same partner for at least a month, and during this time congress must be frequent.[1]

Coitus interruptus is known, but I have recorded it as practised in only two ghotul, Binjhli and Padde. I would not ordinarily pay much attention to the negative evidence in such a case, but in this matter inquiries have been made widely and with great care. There does not seem to be any reason why people who are prepared to discuss freely the most intimate sexual matters, even those that are taboo, should deny the method unless it really did not exist. In the majority of ghotul, it had not even been heard of, and a description of it was greeted with astonishment and even mirth. 'How should anyone withdraw at the very moment we want it to stay longer and go deeper?' asked a chelik at Kabonga, and at Markabera the comment was, 'After you have entered with so much trouble, how can you leave before your work is over?' Even at Binjhli the girls said that they disliked it and tried to prevent the boys' doing it except immediately after menstruation.[2]

X 883 Certain supposedly contraceptive herbs are taken orally. In Siuni the Muria Gaita prescribed as follows:

842 'Get an anagondri [the white garlic tied to the tall festal poles used by the Rawat at a Marhai bazaar]; let it dry; powder it and give it to a girl at her 278 first menstruation in a little tobacco. This will keep her infertile for several years.'

Another remedy comes from Kuntpadar. The creeper called *keksa* is carefully watched until one is found which gives flowers but no fruit. The chelik goes to this 'barren creeper' on a Saturday and offers a little rice and *urad* pulse to it saying, 'I give you this: now come to help me'. The next day, early in the morning before cock-crow, he sacrifices a black chicken and coconut to the creeper. He sprinkles some of the blood over it and lets a little fall on the kernel of the coconut, a small bit of which he burns.

Now comes a delicate and difficult moment. He must uproot the creeper with a single jerk. If he is hesitant and fumbles with it, the root may turn into a snake and bite him. But if all is well, he takes the root home and waits until his girl's post-catamenial bath falls on a Sunday. On this day she must fast till evening when she is given a bit of the root mixed with the coconut and rice. After this, she will not conceive, just as the creeper, though it gave flowers (menstruation), bore no fruit. It is important, however, to

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[1] The Gadaba of Orissa also believe that occasional intercourse in the dormitory cannot lead to conception; 'the field must be tilled for a long time before it can bear a crop'.

[2] It is curious that *coitus interruptus* is not practised more commonly by primitive people. The Baiga take the same attitude as the Muria: 'the sowing of the seed is the happiest moment in one's life'—how should one resist it?—*The Baiga*, p. 221. But the Tikopia practise it freely.—R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), pp. 490f. It has also been recorded for the Thonga (Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. I, p. 55), the Masai and generally in Africa (Himes, op. cit., pp. 5ff.). Himes quotes Margaret Mead for its existence among the Samoans (ibid., p. 23).

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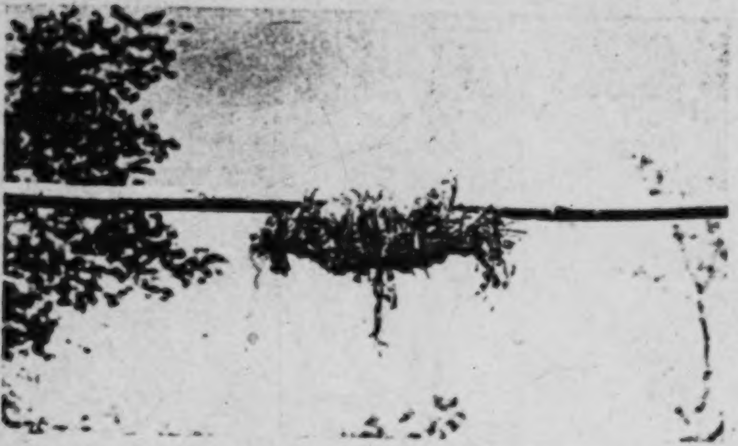

Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

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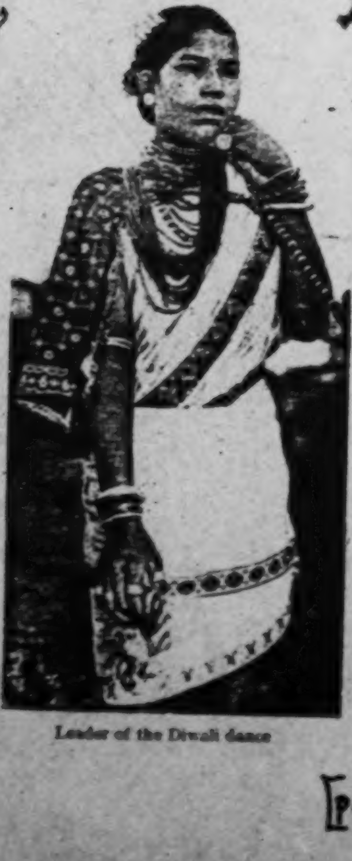
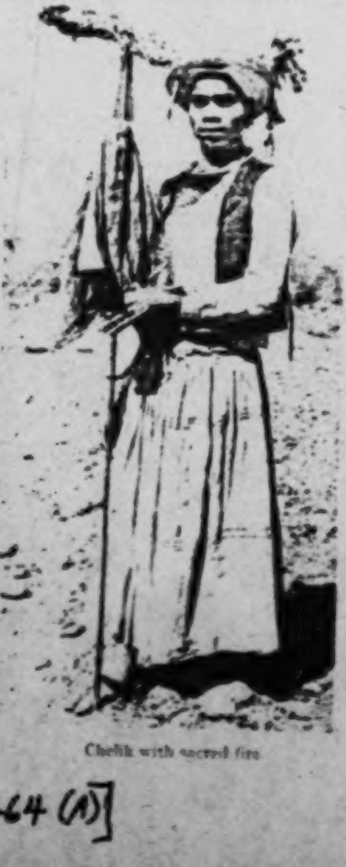
292
778

Plate LXXXIX



Leader of the Diwali dance



Chelik with sacred fire

[p. 464 (A)]

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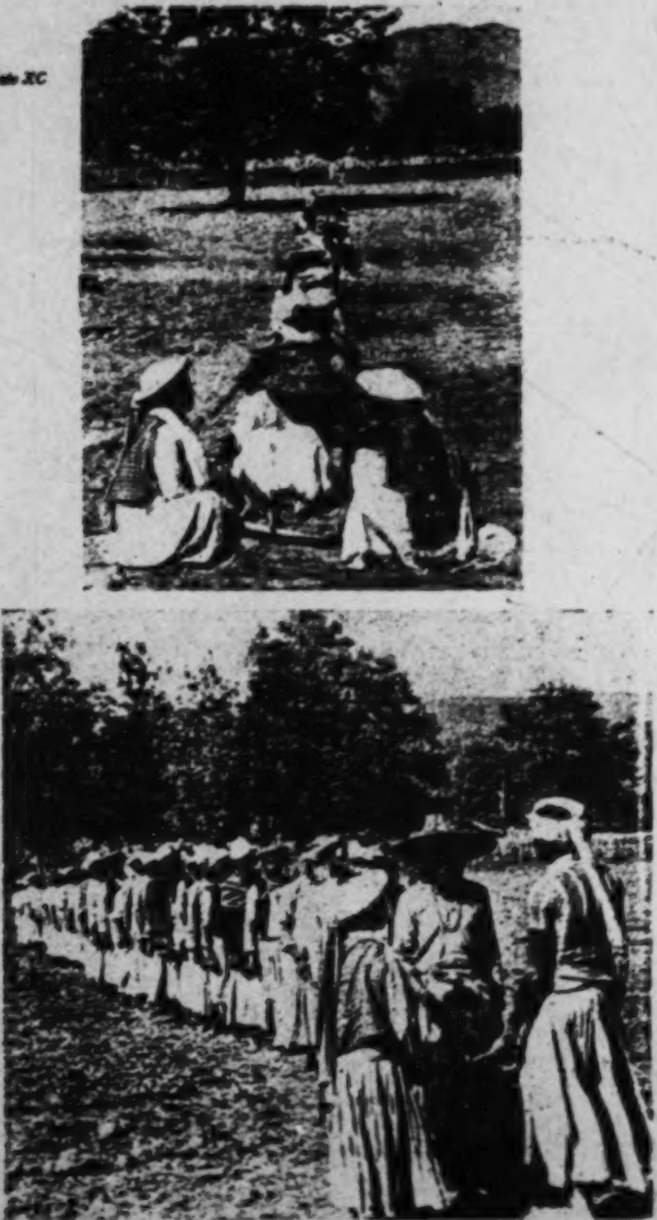
Plate XC



Pus Kolang dance: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Phulpar

[p. 464 (B)]

X 883 see that the root of the creeper has no side-shoots, for these impair its
842 efficacy.

Another orally administered drug is supposed to confer permanent
278 sterilization.

'On a Sunday pick a few pieces of a parasite growing on a tilai tree. Dry them and heat in the fire till they can be powdered easily. Make into small pills with gur and give them to the woman—without her knowing—to eat with parched rice.' This is sometimes given by a chelik to his motiari. 'When there is great love between a boy and girl, he gives it to her so that they can love one another without danger.'

I do not know how commonly these remedies are used, but there is no doubt that chelik and motiari are expected to avoid conception somehow. A pregnancy is regarded as a gross piece of carelessness. There is a general belief that no one need conceive unless they want to, that a definite psychological factor is involved. If a boy and girl do not give themselves to one another with too oblivious a passion, if they hold back a little, if they are careful not to love too constantly or too long, conception need never follow. We have seen that too much love is not approved in the ghotul; conception is the
X punishment of an over-passionate attachment.

883 But when all precautions fail, and a girl finds herself pregnant, what happens?
Directly she finds that 'the moon has come again, but the stream of blood is
847 dry', she tells her chelik. There is no difficulty in the old type of ghotul; her
ghotul-husband will look after her. In the newer type, where during the
278 course of the month the girl may have been sleeping with a dozen different
boys, she chooses either the one she likes best or the one with whom she first
had congress after her last period. His immediate duty is to bring
abortifacients.

Abortions are probably fairly common. In one village I was told that they mixed gur, ashes and the strongest mahua spirit available and gave it to the girl to drink. In another place the Muria said that they used gunpowder [1] mixed with mahua spirit. In Kokori, the Gaita recommended the obviously magical remedy of taking a bit of bark from a mahua tree which had been struck by lightning. This was burnt and the ashes mixed with liquor. In Berma, an eighty-year-old Muria recalled how when he was Nengi of the ghotul he made the Nirosa pregnant. He first dosed her with *kehsa* root, but without success, apparently because he did not know the correct ritual of obtaining it, and then on a Monday he bought a bottle of *phuli* liquor. 'On that day we both fasted and in the evening, after bathing, I offered an egg and some liquor to Lingo Pen saying, "O Mahapurub Lingo, if you are a true god, let this girl abort: if you don't, the sin is yours and not mine. You founded the ghotul and if you truly live there till this day, show proof of it and I will offer you another egg". I then made the girl drink the rest of the liquor and in her drunkenness she aborted. As I had promised I gave the second egg to Lingo Pen.'

X 883 In one ghotul, about which I believe I have entirely authentic information,
six of the girls had procured abortions; one had achieved it three times, twice
847 in the third month and once in the fourth; another girl had achieved it twice.
But the motiari do not like using abortifacients, for they believe that they
lead to sterility later on, and this ghotul was probably exceptional. There

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[1] Himes (op. cit., p. 8) quotes an unpublished report by W. B. Cline that 'it is the custom among the natives of the Oasis of Siwa in the Lybian Desert to drink infusions of gunpowder' as a contraceptive measure.

x 883 847 were a number of older girls there; in other places, where only a few motiari exceed three years from the menarche, such large-scale abortifacient practices appear to be unnecessary. In any case the practice is not approved by the elders of the tribe. In Hathipakna, the Malko was made pregnant by the Jamadar, both being of the same clan. An older man tried to procure an abortion, but failed; the matter became known and he was fined five rupees by the clan panchayat.

x 883 848 If all their efforts fail, the chelik and motiari report the matter to the ghotul leaders, who keep it dark as long as possible. There is no greater ghotul crime than to reveal such a secret in the village.

In the meantime the girl may elope with the same or another lover, and get married quietly elsewhere. If the marriage season is at hand, it is not uncommon for the parents to hurry on the marriage with the girl's original betrothed, and for no one to say anything about it. When this happens it is whispered that 'the girl has a baby in her *haldi-dhoti*', that is, while she is still wearing the clothes stained with the marriage oil.

If neither of these solutions are possible, the headman and elders of the village hold a panchayat in the ghotul, at which all the chelik and motiari must be present. The headman says, 'By whose hand is this? Whose is this belly?' The girl says nothing but goes to the boy responsible and takes him by the hand. If the parents of her betrothed are present, the headman says, 'Look, your goods are damaged; do you still want them or no?' He turns to the girl and says, referring to her betrothed, 'Do you still want this boy or no?'

One of two things thus can happen. If the girl's betrothed is willing to have her, and she has no objection, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. The chelik who caused the pregnancy has to pay some compensation to the husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. This happens more commonly than one would expect; if a girl is pregnant, even by another boy, it is at least a proof that she will not be barren. Out of the 80 pregnancies to which I have referred already, in only 26 cases did the girl marry her lover; in the other 54 cases she married her betrothed.

Where the girl refuses to marry her betrothed or he decides that he does not want her, as happened in the 26 cases, she declares in the panchayat. 'This boy has given me this belly. I will go with him and never leave him.' When she says this, her parents abuse her, for it will mean financial loss to them, and the elders give everyone a lecture, pointing out that such things never happened in their day and that with a little care all such scandals could be avoided. When the Kotwar of Atpal made a girl pregnant, the elders fined him and reproved him with the words, 'When a mare has an itch for it, she allows the horse to mount her, but she knows she cannot stop the seed from entering her. You too knew it, so why were you not careful?'

A long discussion, generally entirely financial, follows. Fines are imposed and compensation decided. The village elders demand their share. The marriage is arranged as soon as possible.

In either case, the child is accepted by its real or legal father, and the origin of its birth is soon forgotten. It carries little stigma, and once the financial side of the incident is settled, little more is said. For the disgrace and danger of a pregnancy is not a moral one. A pregnancy is dreaded because everyone makes a fuss, the routine of daily life is upset, the matrimonial arrangements so carefully devised to unite families and repay old debts are disturbed, there is a general feeling that someone has blundered. The chelik and motiari are embarrassed, but they are not ashamed.

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In 883x
Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar.
The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they 848
could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they 583
were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own
betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him.
It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged
couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either
by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in 883x
marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who
married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic 848
life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original
partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual 593
connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high
divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages.
Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them
were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been 883x
taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which
I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the 848
pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion
between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy 674
appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, 762
especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom 883x
everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of 842

X883 842 eager youth and splendid physical vigour the chelik and motiari cohabit, employing few precautions worth the name, and yet achieve so low a pregnancy rate as 4 per cent? What explanations have been advanced to solve the problem in other cultures?

X883 842 171 Our first point must be to insist that there really is a problem. When chelik and motiari sleep together, do they really have sexual intercourse, or do they seek some other form of sexual gratification that does not involve the penetration of the male seed into the vagina? This question has been raised for the Bantu by Torday who believes that he has solved the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity by showing that it is not promiscuity at all.

> It is scarcely credible that Bantu parents and elders should be devoid of common sense to such an extent as to permit their children to have promiscuous intercourse and yet visit them with dire penalties when the natural consequence, pregnancy, follows. When this question has been fully investigated (an extremely delicate task) it will be found, no doubt, that what is generally described as free sexual intercourse between unmarried youngsters is nothing more than one form or another of mutual masturbation.[1]

African tradition undoubtedly favours some form of unconsummated sexual excitement. Laubscher has described the practice of *metsha* among the Tembu and Fingo peoples. This is performed by the boy facing the girl and placing his penis between her thighs, but penetration must be avoided and every three days the girls are examined to ensure that they remain virgins. Laubscher says that this early erotic form of hetero-sexual adaptation does not, at the pre-pubertal period, replace masturbation.[2] Leakey describes a somewhat similar practice of the Masai warriors in their *manyatta*-dormitories. Although a girl cannot refuse an invitation to sleep with the men, 'she is not necessarily expected to allow a man full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so. Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyattas* countless times.'[3] Similar sexual play without consummation is known as *ngwiko* by the Wakikuyu[4] and as *umba* by the Akikuyu. Driberg describes Lango intrigues with unmarried girls as 'platonic' in so far that, although a couple may spend a whole night together, they must not enjoy full sexual relations.[5]

Such practices must involve considerable strain, both physical and psychological, and it is notable that Leakey says that in the dormitory Masai girls 'usually have no objection to full intercourse' except on certain days. The Muria certainly seek to limit the amount of intercourse. Some ghotul send their girls to sleep at home or in a separate house; in these the boys sometimes practise masturbation after the girls have gone, but far more often have intercourse with them on their way home. As in the Masai dormitory, a girl is not bound to have intercourse with the boy she sleeps with on any particular day, but—unlike the Masai tradition—she cannot refuse to have intercourse with him at all. A few girls manage to avoid intercourse for several years, but they are not approved, and the very fact that they are discussed and criticized indicates their rarity. Chelik and motiari do, however, often sleep together without sexual congress. The girls have a practice, called *dinga-dinga*, of playing with the penis, and the great prominence given to the clitoris in drawings suggests that they indulge in some form of clitoridical stimulation. But full sexual intercourse is everywhere the rule, and is normal through all divergences and for every type of ghotul. 883x 842 171

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[1] E. Torday, 'The Principles of Bantu Marriage', *Africa* (London, 1929), Vol. II, p. 256.
[2] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 79.
[3] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, p. 194.
[4] C. Dundas, 'Native Laws of some Bantu Tribes', *JRAI*, Vol. LI, p. 248.
[5] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango* (London, 1923), p. 155.

How far does infanticide and abortion solve the problem? Hutton suggests this for the Angami Naga.

> The licence allowed to unmarried girls raises another question. What of their children? Here accurate information is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Illegitimate children are very rare, and Mr Davis remarks that 'it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they are made away with immediately after birth, or that abortion is procured before the birth of the child'.[1]

Yet few cases come to the courts, and even Hutton with his great experience was unable to find examples. For the Muria I have described an attempt at abortion as a routine measure in cases of ghotul pregnancy, but its ineffectiveness is shown not only by definite statements to that effect, but also by the number of children actually born. Infanticide is, I am certain, unknown.

The Muria themselves, as we have seen, place considerable reliance on a frequent change of partners. Pitt-Rivers suggested that promiscuity sterilizes by mixing the sperms of different males.[2] Westermarck considered that promiscuity resulted in a pathological condition of the vagina that resulted in barrenness.[3] But the theory of a spermotoxin has not been endorsed by any responsible scientist, and is not supported by the Muria statistics, for there are more pregnancies in the ghotul where partners are frequently changed than in those where each motiari remains faithful to a single partner. 883x 842

Not altogether unsound is the Muria belief that contraception is secured by spacing acts of congress and that pregnancy cannot follow single or casual coitus. 'Conception often in the writings of novelists', says Zuckerman, 'results from an isolated sexual act, but in real life this is probably exceptional',[4] and he quotes Meaker as saying that:

> Undoubtedly there are human matings in which a single act of coitus, or at most coitus repeated at intervals throughout one menstrual month, would infallibly produce conception, but these are exceptions. Most couples who succeed in reproducing do so in spite of certain imperfections in the conceptive mechanism .... most people are relatively and not absolutely fertile.[5]

The Muria belief has naturally arisen from an observation of what actually happens. A girl who remains infertile in the ghotul quickly conceives after marriage. 'A motiari', said a chelik at Bhanpuri, 'is an unenclosed clearing; a wife is fenced and irrigated land. As you care for it, it soon bears a harvest, and becomes more and more easy to plough.' And the Jholer of Morokoro said, 'We had a child within a year of our marriage, for we loved each other and had congress without fear'. 883x

This belief seems to be common in the Pacific. Of the Melanesians of British New Guinea, Seligman says, 842 171

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[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 171.
[2] G. H. L. Pitt-Rivers, *The Clash of Culture* (London, 1927), p. 148.
[3] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I, p. 334.
[4] S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey'. *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 48.
[5] S. R. Meaker, *Human Sterility* (London, 1934), p. 41.

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> I believe that . . . Papuasian girls are less easily impregnated than the women of the white race. Whether this is in any degree due to early coitus, early and strenuous work in the gardens, or is a racial peculiarity I do not venture to surmise, but the point of view taken becomes perhaps more comprehensible when it is remembered that the Sinaugolo hold that a single act of coitus is insufficient to produce conception, so that a Sinaugolo girl does not expect to have a child unless visited fairly regularly for a comparatively lengthy time, perhaps not less than a month.[1]

The Tikopia also believe that,

> A child cannot be conceived by a single act of impregnation, but only by a repeated series of acts. This is in line with the view that the child is formed by the coagulation of semen, hence several deposits at close intervals are necessary. The habit of young people of copulating once then missing some days before the next time of intercourse is a corollary of this.[2]

The Muria belief in a safe, or rather unsafe, period is widely shared by other communities. Ancient Indian tradition regarded the *ritu*, or the period extending from the fourth to the twelfth day after the beginning of the menses, as particularly favourable to conception. A husband must approach his wife at this time; if he does not he will suffer the pains of hell.[3] The same belief is universally distributed in modern India, with an emphasis on the first or the first two days after the close of the period. Many aboriginal tribes insist on their women behaving with special restraint and care on these days.

Hollis reports that the Nandi girls are careful not to visit the huts of the warriors for some days after their period 'for fear of becoming pregnant after intercourse with the men'.[4] Himes quotes a report on the Isleta Indians of New Mexico that 'if a woman does not wish to conceive she will not have intercourse for nine days after menstruation'.[5] The great gynaecologist Soronos warned his readers to abstain from coitus directly before and after menstruation.[6] Aetios of Amida, a Greek physician of the sixth century, gave the same advice.[7]

The Muria belief that conception is a girl's own fault and that it can be avoided by the proper psychological attitude during coitus—'Let her not want it, let her not give herself, let her be quiet and not respond—and there will be no danger'—resembles the ancient Chinese practice known as Kong-fou, a sort of self-hypnosis by which the thoughts during intercourse were directed elsewhere. Kisch quotes Riedel as authority for a statement that the women of the island of Buru often had intercourse with strange men, 'but maintained a passive and indifferent state, for the purpose of avoiding conception', and adds that 'it is well known' that

> An active participation on the part of the woman in the sexual act, by increasing her voluptuous sensations, gives rise to certain reflex actions—descent of the uterus, rounding of the os uteri, induration of the portio vaginalis, and, finally, ejaculation of the secretion of the cervical

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[1] Seligman, op. cit., p. 500.

[2] Firth, op. cit., p. 492.

[3] J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 215ff., where references to the classical texts are given.

[4] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 82.

[5] Himes, op. cit., p. 15, quoting E. C. Parsons in *47th Ann. Rep. B.A.E.*, p. 213.

[6] Ibid., p. 90.

[7] Ibid., p. 94.

glands and of the glands of Bartholin; these changes accelerate the entrance of the semen into the cavity of the uterus, and increase the motility of the spermatozoa.[1] 883x 842 171

But Kisch considers that sufficient dependence cannot be placed on this belief that the uterine reflexes are under the conscious will. Himes thinks that the idea simply 'proceeds from a sense of guilt in coitus; if it is not enjoyed, the consequences will not be so unfortunate'.[2] This might well apply to European women, but it is rare to find this sense of guilt among the Muria, though once a chelik at Moroskoro admitted that when, after marriage, he copulated without fear of the consequences his wife quickly became pregnant.

We may note finally that the Muria are not exceptionally fertile. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 150 were infertile, though some of these may have been fruitful later. Of these 150, only 1 husband had previously caused a ghotul pregnancy, and his subsequent sterility was regarded by his wife (who was probably the real person at fault) as a punishment. This infertility may be due to dietary factors; but it is interesting that the inflammatory diseases, such as mumps and epididymitis, which usually cause sterility in the male, are practically unknown among the Muria. 883x 842

All these different factors have probably contributed to the low conception- and birth-rate in the Muria ghotul. A certain number of abortions are procured by not very efficient means; *coitus interruptus* is occasionally practised; certain disciplines and restraints undoubtedly play their part. But the Muria have no form of contraception, that is sufficiently widely practised, that can account for only 80 pregnancies caused by 2000 males copulating at least twice a week (to give the lowest figure for the most disciplined ghotul) for the period between the ages of 12 and 17.

The most satisfactory general explanation is to be found in the theory, usually associated with the name of Hartman, of a period of adolescent sterility. This explanation was first promulgated by Crew in his Presidential Address on 'Puberty and Maturity' before the Second International Congress for Sex Research held in London in 1930. From experiments conducted on 100 female mice at the first oestrous Crew found that while 20 refused to mate, only 24 of the 80 who did mate became pregnant. But three or six months later, the fertility rate rose to 80 or 90 per cent. 'It is seen, therefore', says Crew, 'that though pregnancy can occur at the time of the first oestrous, it is relatively uncommon.'[3] The following year Hartman developed this theory as a result of his observations on the sex life of rhesus monkeys, and in a number of important publications[4] has since established the fact that there is not only a 'very high incidence of non-ovulatory cycles in young mammals but that human beings also have an infecund period for some years after the menarche'. Ashley-Montague has given an admirably lucid summary of this and subsequent literature on the subject. 'It has long been known', he points out, 'that puberty is by no means coincident with the development of the reproductive powers, that in the girl menstruation may long precede the

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[1] E. H. Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Women*, Eng. trans. by M. E. Paul (New York, 1926), p. 403.

[2] Himes, op. cit., p. 81.

[3] F. A. E. Crew, 'Puberty and Maturity' in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Sex Research* (London, 1930), p. 9.

[4] C. G. Hartman, 'On the Relative Sterility of the Adolescent Organism', *Science*, Vol. LXXIV (1931), pp. 226-7; *Contributions to Embryology*, No. 134 (Washington, 1932), pp. 1-164; *Time of Ovulation in Women* (Baltimore and London, 1936); *Sex and Internal Secretions* (Baltimore, 1932).

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more important function of ovulation, and that in the youth ejaculation may long precede the process of spermatogenesis.' The experiments of Mills and Ogle on mice, and of Yerkes and others on the chimpanzee have confirmed this belief. Ashley-Montague quotes investigations made by Mondiere on the women of Cochin China, by Maxwell on Chinese women from South Fukien, by Mills and Ogle on white and negro mothers of illegitimate children, and by Chau and Wright on a very large number of Chinese women living in sub-tropical Canton.[1] Among the latter, the mean age at menarche was 14·5 years, the mean age at marriage 17·6 years and the mean age at the birth of the first child 20·5 years—which suggests a sterility interval of 6 years.

> It seems probable that in the human female, and in the mammals, which have thus far been studied, there is generally an interval of anything up to five years or more between menarche and the ability to procreate, during which the female is functionally sterile and unable to reproduce. This sterile interval has been shown by Hartman to be due, in the monkey at least, to the non-ovulatory character of the adolescent menstrual cycle. And as Hartman has pointed out, puberty, which is signalized by the onset of the first menstruation, merely marks 'the early manifestation of a train of events (adolescence) which only after three or four years on the average lead to ovulation and conception, the proof of maturity'. It is such facts as these, as Hartman has also suggested, which may possibly explain the infertility of the unmarried women in primitive societies.[2]

Zuckerman, in an article wherein he prophesied that both puberty and the menopause will one day become controllable events, has adopted and discussed the theory.

> Only the first phase of the full ovulation cycle is experienced for a long period after the process of reproductive maturation (puberty) sets in both in man and monkeys. The anterior lobe of pituitary presumably undergoes waves of activity during which it elaborates only a follicular-maturation hormone, or only enough of a general gonadotropic hormone, to cause development of the ovarian follicles. The hormone produced by the developing follicles causes growth of the uterine mucosa, and when the wave of pituitary activity comes to an end, the wave of follicular growth it stimulated also ceases, so that the uterus no longer comes under the influence of the follicular hormone. As a result, a retrogressive uterine phase sets in and menstruation occurs. The first menstrual cycles after puberty probably always follow this course, i.e. the first menstrual cycles experienced by women are usually unaccompanied by ovulation.
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> Hence it was that the Trobriand Islanders studied by Malinowski never conceived in their early youth in spite of unrestricted sexual

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[1] M. F. Ashley-Montague, *Coming into Being among the Australian Aborigines* (London, 1937), pp. 236ff., and 'Adolescent Sterility' in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, Vol. XIV (1939), pp. 13–34, 192–219. Dr Ashley-Montague was good enough to communicate his conclusions to me from America during the war, and I am greatly indebted to him for the light he has thrown on a problem which, to everyone who lives in the aboriginal world, is of great interest and importance.

[2] A. T. Mondiere, 'Sur la Monographie de la Femme de la Cochinchine', *Bull. de la Soc. d'Anthrop.*, T. 3, Ser. 3 (1880), pp. 250–61; C. A. Mills and C. Ogle, 'Physiologic Sterility of Adolescence', *Human Biology*, Vol. VIII (1936), pp. 607–15; K. T. Chau and J. M. Wright, 'Gynaecological Notes: Canton Hospital', *China Medical Journal*, 1925, pp. 684–7.

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licence. Hence, too, births rarely occur before the third year of effective marital relationship in Indian 'child marriages'.[1]

Let us now turn to a consideration of the Muria statistics. I give below a table showing the number of births of a first child at varying ages. It may be said with a good deal of confidence that effective marriage never or rarely begins before a year after the menarche, and in many cases not for two or three years.[2] It never occurs in the pre-pubertal period.

Table I, then, gives the number of births for each period of months or years after effective marriage. The total number of cases examined was 2000, of which 150 were infertile.

TABLE I

Length of time after effective marriage	Number of births
Within a month	1
After 2 months	1
3 months	6
4 months	3
5 months	1
6 months	17
7 months	10
8 months	4
9 months	3
1 year	187
a year and a half	50
2 years	463
2½ years	93
3 years	603
4 years	180
5 years	116
Uncertain	112

I have some confidence in the accuracy of these figures because the length of time before a child is born is a matter of the greatest interest to both wife and husband. It is probably one of the few things in Muria life about which accurate calculations are made.

I have less confidence in my other tables, but I give them because they are interesting and suggestive. They represent the result of an inquiry in which men belonging to 220 different ghotul were consulted about the conception-problem during their own chelik periods. Each man may be assumed to have spent at least 5 years in the ghotul. Few of them showed any reluctance to talk about the affairs of their youth: the statements of those who did were

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[1] S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 39.

[2] The average age of menarche in the Indian girl has been given as 14·21 ± 1·66 years.—Curjel, 'The Reproductive Life of Indian Women', *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol. VIII (1920), pp. 366ff.

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checked by separate inquiries from other members of the same ghotul. In the 220 ghotul there were histories of 327 pregnancies. The Muria were consulted about the ages of the girls who became pregnant, and the number of years which had passed in each case between menarche and pregnancy. Muria calculations are obviously rough and ready, but it is hard to see how we can get more accurate figures for a primitive society. I give them for what they are worth.

TABLE II

Ages of girls at first pre-marital pregnancy in 327 cases	
15	1
16	26
17	49
18	68
19	63
20	46
21	25
22	18
23	23
24	8

TABLE III

Number of years between menarche and pregnancy in the above 327 cases	
1	2
2	61
3	99
4	82
5	30
6	28
7	3
Uncertain	22

Even though these figures cannot be regarded with the confidence one would give to laboratory material, they are strikingly suggestive of the sterility interval. Table I, which refers to the post-marital period, is confirmed by the two other Tables which describe pre-marital conceptions.

I have little doubt that here we have the real solution of our problem.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DREAMS

OFFICIALLY it is not possible to dream inside the ghotul, for Lingo and the other ghotul gods protect those who sleep there, and indeed I believe that in many places the boys and girls dream very little, enjoying sound and satisfying sleep in the security, warmth and delight of their peculiar realm. 883x 828

But not all ghotul are equally happy. In Binjhli for example, where there was a strange atmosphere of jealousy and frustration, I heard a great deal about dreams. And in all villages there are official and standardized dreams which are believed to be the normal means of receiving communications from gods or ancestors.

It is not possible, I think, to provide material on this subject which will be of much value to the psycho-analyst. It is very difficult to obtain the Muria's associations to their dreams; their memory is poor and they are so timid that too prolonged an inquiry is likely to make it impossible to obtain any information at all. But it is possible to discover various ideas and attitudes of the Muria through an examination of their dreams, especially since the most important are of the official type.

What is the Muria theory of dreams? Where do they come from and why do we see them? Some say that all sleep is a dream; sleep is the food by which man's life is recreated and 'the dream is the chutney of sleep'. As with other Indian aboriginals the Muria theory of dreams is closely related to the idea of the soul or *jiwa*. The *jiwa* leaves the body in sleep, goes here and there and what it sees during its adventures is the dream.[1] The power of the *jiwa* to leave the body is described in a significant tale from Ulera. 828 774

> One day long ago two men went to a blacksmith's shop to rest. One fell asleep, the other sat by his side watching. Presently from the sleeper's mouth there came out his *jiwa* in the form of a lizard and went to feed. A dog saw it and chased it into an ant-hill. There it saw a pot full of rupees. 828 539 774
>
> The other man covered the sleeper's face with coal-dust for a joke. When the *jiwa* returned it did not recognize its body with the blackened face, and went away seeking for it elsewhere. By and by the second man noticed a lizard going to and fro, and soon realized what had happened. He quickly cleaned the sleeper's face, and the lizard, recognizing the body, entered it, and became a *jiwa* again.
>
> When the sleeper awoke he told his friend what he had seen in his dreams, and they went to the ant-hill and found the rupees. This is a true tale of what actually occurred.[2]

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[1] Compare *The Baiga*, p. 408.

[2] The literature of the 'separable soul' is considerable. It appears in folk-tales as the useful motif of 'entering another's body' which, as Penzer rightly insists, must not be confused with the quite distinct 'life-index' motif. Crooke observes that 'in Bombay it is considered most reprehensible to play jokes on a sleeping person, such as painting the face in fantastic colours, or giving moustaches to a sleeping woman. The absent soul may not be able to find its own body, the appearance of which has been thus changed, and may depart altogether, leaving the body a corpse'.—*Religion and Folk-Lore*, Vol. I, p. 232. For the subject generally see *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p. 37, n.2; A. E. Crawley, 'Doubles', Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IV, pp. 853f.; M. Bloomfield, 'On the Art of Entering Another's Body', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. LVI, pp. 1ff.;

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Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

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Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

Good Dreams

One's dead parents . . .	. . Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river . .	. . Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

from a tree is very bad at Kokori and Gorma, but good elsewhere, though it is always bad to dream of climbing.

The reason for this divergence may be that in some cases dream-interpretation does not depend on any manifest or latent symbolism, but has been worked out pragmatically: a marriage dream did in fact one day precede a death at Palli or luck in the hunt at Koilibera, and ever afterwards it has been associated with failure or success.

The interpretations are in any case not very clear. The association of fish with dropsy is interesting, so is that of flying with evil spirits and of raw meat with witches. But I cannot see the connexion between a kotri fish and money, or liquor and meat, or a tiger and hunger. It is remarkable, in view of the hobby-horse dances,[1] that the horse should be regarded as a spirit and so unlucky.

These interpretations are taken quite seriously and often guide a man's conduct. The chelik may refuse to go on a Pus Kolang expedition if one of them has a dream of a tiger shortly before they set out. A motiari will be wise if she avoids visiting the ghotul the day after she has dreamt of a river in flood, for this suggests that her menstrual period is imminent.

We must turn now to the official or standardized dream by which the Muria receive communications from the gods and the Departed. Muria social life is, as we have just seen, sometimes guided by a chance dream of a prophetic nature. But the religious and disciplinary side of its life is almost dominated by such dreams. When a god, for example, feels that he is neglected or forgotten he may draw attention to himself either by bringing disease upon a village or by sending dreams. The god does not always come in his own form, but symbolically. For example, a neglected Kanyang may appear as a motiari and will continue to bother the sleeper until offerings are made to her. The Yer Kanyang may appear as a crocodile. If the crocodile seizes you in a dream and you do nothing about it, you will fall ill. To prevent this the dreamer calls the Siraha and goes with him to the river to offer egg-shell ground up with burnt earth from below a hearth, vermilion for the naiad's forehead, bangles for her arms, and coloured wool for her hair.

Dreaming of a horse means that a Rau (or forest-[illegible]d) is angry, and eggs and parched rice must be offered to him. In Dongrigura the Gaita said that the dream of a horse, buffalo, pig or peacock meant that a Rau was dissatisfied with the attention he was getting. If the Rau appeared in the form of a horse or a buffalo, it was necessary to make an iron image of the animal and offer it to him. For a pig or peacock, however, the sacrifice of a pigeon was sufficient. At Sirsi, if a man dreams that he is caught by a tiger, this is supposed to indicate the displeasure of the Earth Mother and two or three days afterwards the villagers have to assemble and sacrifice a chicken in her honour.

Such dreams represent the whims or spleen of deities according to their mood. More important instructions are given by the clan-gods with regard to the construction of the Anga. As far as I know, every Anga is made or repaired as a result of a dream. For example, at Karanji, there was an Anga of Bara Deo, but no sacrifice was being made to it in 1942 because the Pen-Gaita, Ghenwa, was dead and the god had not yet come in a dream to appoint his successor. The Duma-guru (ancestral priest) also had failed to appear. In this village it is the custom for Bara Deo to come in a dream saying that offerings are to be made and the Duma-guru directs the place and time. At

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[1] See pp. 207ff.

DREAMS

Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. 787 This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest.

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. 787 Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. 791 In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done.

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. 787 Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'.

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

781 Not only religious functions and duties are revealed in dreams. In Alor a chelik said that he sometimes dreamt the songs and dances that were to be performed on the morrow. Another chelik in Nayanar said that he dreamt once that he was able to do a new kind of dance and sing a song that he had never been able to learn in fact. After his dream he found that he could do both. At Kabonga, the Village Mother sometimes comes in a dream to tell the boys to dance, and next day they go to a neighbouring village and perform the Hulki.

154 Of the dreams recorded from chelik and motiari the majority were frankly sexual in their manifest content. This was perhaps what was to be expected; although the ghotul is hardly a home of repressed wishes there are some which from time to time pass through periods of stress and tension, and there are boys and girls in both types of ghotul who suffer the frustration of their desires. But where among ourselves such desires express themselves in discreet symbolism, the ghotul's frank and open attitude to sex permits the censor mechanism to lie unused. The most common ghotul dreams are those of 'eating, playing, dancing and sexual congress'.

A very interesting series of dreams were recorded for me by my wife from two motiari in the Binjhli ghotul. At that time (December 1940) this ghotul, which is one of those which does not permit permanent attachments, was passing through a difficult phase. There were about a dozen girls of eighteen years or more who were for various reasons unable to get married; they had been in the ghotul for a long time; young and beautiful motiari were growing up and diverting the attention of the chelik. Angry scenes between the motiari were not uncommon and some of the older girls were restless and unhappy. Such was the situation in which two of the senior motiari had the following dreams. I will give first those of the head girl of the ghotul, a motiari of about nineteen years.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik I love. I have often wept as I remembered the dream.
>
> I have often dreamt that I was married.
>
> On a dancing expedition I borrowed all the combs of a young and beautiful motiari.
>
> I dreamt I was sleeping with the chelik I loved. He combed my hair. The next morning he gave me eight combs, for he saw I hadn't any.

And these are the dreams of her assistant, a motiari perhaps seventeen years old, a pretty girl.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik outside the ghotul. We were caught and I was fined three bottles of liquor.
>
> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik on separate mats side by side. I held him in my hands all night. He never took his hands off my breast.
>
> I often dream of intercourse. When the boy approaches me I say, 'Hush, what's the matter with you?'
>
> A chelik slept with me in my dream. He held my breasts tightly in his hands. I said, 'Don't do that, let me go'. He said, 'How can I help it? I always do it'. I said, 'You chelik have no mercy on us'.

In the Binjhli ghotul, the motiari sleep with their chelik only once a week. On other days, after an evening of strong sexual stimulation, the girls return to their separate house. Several of these dreams appear to show the influence of this. The longing for combs revealed in the first set of dreams and the obvious jealousy of the young girl who had many of them, reflects a common

Plate XCI

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The Malik of the Jungani ghotul with friends

[p. 480 (a)]

Plate XCII

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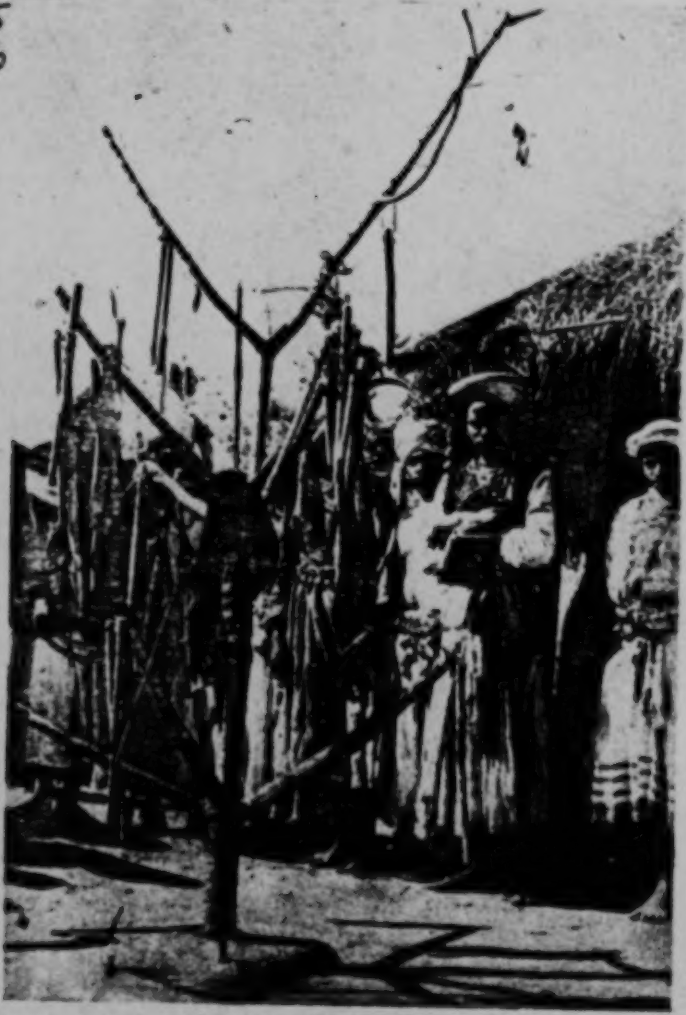

The semur tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks

[p. 480(b)]

motive in ghotul life: the comb is the treasured gift of a lover and to have many combs is a proof of attractiveness and sexual power. The first dream of the second girl, where she slept with her lover outside the ghotul and was fined, reflects one of the methods by which the rule against too passionate an association with a particular person is avoided.

It is very difficult to obtain the dreams of motiari; I cannot, therefore, say whether the fact that every one of those recorded has a sexual motif is of significance or not. But the dreams themselves are interesting and rather pathetic.

Everywhere I have found many dreams of frustration among the chelik. This is not perhaps what we should expect, but it may be that the only dreams they remember are those about an experience which is so unusual to them. Naturally, even in the ghotul, where sexual opportunity is so free, a boy or a girl will from time to time have sexual desires that cannot be satisfied at the moment. Such desires will give rise to dreams, but these must not be regarded as suggesting that the ghotul is generally a place of lost opportunities and frustrated desires.

Gadru of the Chapai ghotul had the following dreams:

> After a heavy meal one night, I dreamt that I had visited a neighbour's house and was smoking a leaf-pipe. A beautiful motiari sat down beside me and said, '*Eh dāda*, give me some tobacco'. But as I was looking for a mat on which we might sleep, I awoke.
>
> One day when I was sleeping outside the ghotul, a pretty motiari came and lay down beside me. I said to her, 'O girl, let me do what I desire'. Her breasts appeared flat to the eye but when I pressed them I found they were *gatto dado*, hard as pegs, to the touch. I mounted her but could not find her vagina, and while I was searching for it my water left me and I awoke.
>
> One day I dreamt that I was going to another village and saw a motiari bringing water from the river. I said to her, 'Give me something; promise you won't refuse'. She caught hold of me and dragged me along; but when I looked at my clothes I saw they were stained with blood that was flowing from her, and I awoke. After this dream I went the following day to the bank of the river and made offerings to the Yer Kanyang.

This dreamer Gadru was nearly drowned when he was a little boy and was only saved with great difficulty. The Siraha declared that the boy's accident was due to his father's failure to fulfil a vow he had made to the Yer Kanyang to sacrifice a pig when he had been out fishing. Probably this old association appears in his third dream.[1]

Here are some more dreams of frustration. In Chandabera, the Mukhwan dreamt

> One night I was making love to the Alosa, but when I was about to have intercourse with her, she got up and ran away.

This dream actually materialised after three days, although before that the boy had never had anything to do with the Alosa. He said that if he had dreamt that he was actually having intercourse with the girl, he would never

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[1] The belief in a 'drowning spirit' or Dubha and in the Jata Burhi, the old woman who lives in tanks and drowns the unwary, is probably still common in Bengal and Bihar, and is reflected in Muria ideas about the Yer Kanyang. See S. C. Mitra, 'Water Spirits in North Bihar', *Man in India*, Vol. III (1923), pp. 196ff. and the same writer's article, 'Superstitions Regarding Drowning and Drowned Persons', *JASB*, Vol. LXII.

154 have won her later on. The dream of frustration, therefore, is sometimes a lucky one.

Then again, at Kokori the ghotul Kotwar dreamt that,

> I went with the chelik and motiari to dance. All the other boys had combs in their hair and necklaces round their throats, but I had forgotten my comb and ran home to get it. As I was going, Dulosa caught hold of me and said, 'Come, *dāda*, come'. Just as I was going with her into the jungle a lot of people came by and I pretended that I was simply going to piss. The people went on, and as I was pissing Dulosa pushed me over and ran away. Dulosa was not a special lover of mine either before or after the dream.
>
> One day Nirosa said to me, 'O *dāda*, I want to sleep with you'. She combed my hair that night, but afterwards when we were about to lie down together, another of the boys came and pulled her away, and I awoke.

This experience must be fairly common in the ghotul. The Kotwar of Kabonga described the following dream:

> One day I dreamt that I was ploughing in my field and felt hungry. I went to bathe in the stream and sat down on a stone. The fish bit my feet. Presently a girl came to fetch water, and I said, 'O girl, where have you been all this time that you only come now?' Then I found that I was eating *jāwa*, but when I lifted the leaf-cup to my lips there was nothing in it but water. I was just going to speak to the girl when I awoke.

A curious incident occurred in Kabonga. Here the Diwan of the ghotul had been married for several years, but still held his office. He described one day how:

> I spent the night in the ghotul and when I went home in the morning my wife was very angry. She said, 'Last night you took the Belosa by force, and the girl has told the whole village'. I was annoyed, but as I was going to find the Belosa, I awoke.

Two days afterwards the Diwan learnt the meaning of this dream. A boy actually did go to the Belosa when she was asleep. She had no idea who it was, and in the morning accused the Kotwar saying, 'He did not let me sleep all night'. Fortified by his dream, which told him that the girl was obviously in the habit of making false accusations, the Diwan ordered that she should be expelled from the ghotul, for she had brought disgrace on them by her lies.

I will give a few other dreams with a manifest sexual content. A chelik in Koilibera told me of a dream in which he saw boys and girls dancing in front of the ghotul. He caught hold of one of the girls and had intercourse with her. While he was with her, a tiger (which is of ill-omen in this village) came and disturbed them.

In Nayanar a chelik said that he often dreamt that he was sleeping with girls from other ghotul.

The younger boys' conflict with their seniors is probably the motive of this dream from Binjhli, given by a rather unattractive boy:

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with the Silo [the most attractive and beautiful girl in the ghotul]. I had my life in her. In the middle of the night she made me get up and lay my body on hers. But just then the Salya woke and said, 'A visitor has come. Give him

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on 154 which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket.

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality 757 they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a 782 few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar:

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black [754] magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear.

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am 787 going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their 753 sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, 782 and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered.

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

787 back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha,
who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and
753 chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away
or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken
782 to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on
the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally
believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

787 To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly
in its very dangerous form of the *aginban*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent
754 against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image
made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

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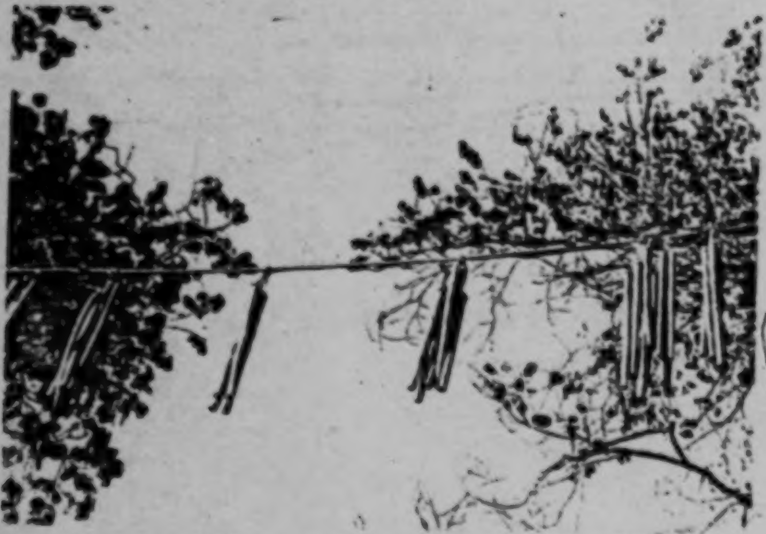
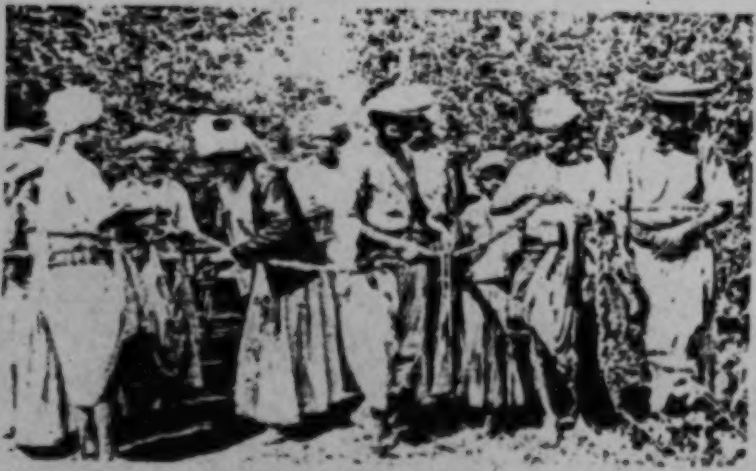


Dancing sticks strung across the road near
the village boundary at Kohbera



Chelik preparing to hoist their
sticks across the road

[p.484(A)]

Plate XCIII

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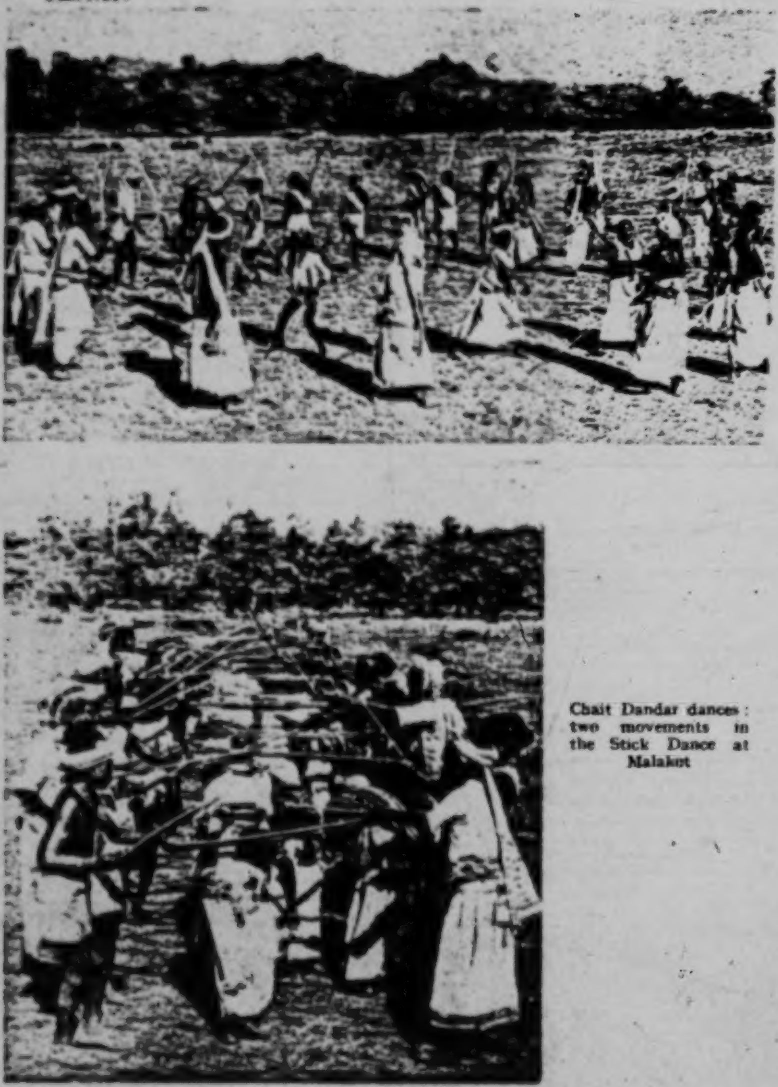
Plate XCIV



Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Malakot

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I

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DELIGHTFUL and enlivening features of ghotul life are the expeditions which are made throughout the year to other villages.[1] I will consider here only those visits which are made by the ghotul officially, under the command of the leaders and with appropriate discipline and rules. Such expeditions are made for marriages, for the festivals of the clan-gods and the Marhai fairs, and—in the cold weather—for ceremonial dancing from village to village. Sometimes the chelik and motiari go together, sometimes separately. Although every trip has a definite and serious purpose it is transformed by the spirit of youth and love into a holiday adventure. Now girls and boys of different villages meet one another and fall in love; now chelik and motiari can go out together on the freest and happiest of picnics far away from the drudgery of everyday life.

Every marriage attracts the neighbouring ghotul; early in the morning of the marriage day the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages are up, decorating themselves, preparing their drums, collecting their few necessities. When they reach their destination, they camp under trees or by a stream. They go to the wedding to help in the making of the booth, to dance before the house and above all to share in the splendid display of the Lagir. They are entertained by the bridegroom's family; they get their food and some liquor. For the rest they roam about together, playing, laughing, flirting or talking and resting in their little outdoor camps. Marriages usually occur in the warm weather and provide a perfect picnic-holiday for everyone.

The great festivals of the clan-gods provide another opportunity for amorous adventure or recreation. The Muria mind does not confuse piety with religion. The gods are to be satisfied and honoured; they must be bathed, fed, humoured, coaxed, caressed; but there is no reason why their worshippers should not enjoy themselves. The Canterbury Pilgrims would have been quite at home at a clan-festival. I have witnessed these at Adnar and Metawand. Hundreds of boys and girls attend them—a magnificent sight with their finery and ornaments. Here again, each ghotul makes a separate camp under trees, but the chelik and motiari dance together and there is more mixing with other villages than in a marriage.

Many a boy arrives with a bottle of mahua liquor half hidden beneath his arm. He has come with a definite purpose of meeting and attracting a girl from another village. At night he may be seen with a torch searching everywhere for his sweetheart. Even married men are allowed licence on these occasions. The gods themselves, carried about by mediumistic Siraha, assault the girls and chase them about. The festal dancing begins about nine o'clock in the evening and goes on till dawn; it is a splendid and moving spectacle. All round are little camp fires, and as the night wears on more and more boys and girls slip away together into the jungle or retire to sit by the fire and drink their liquor.

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There are finally the ceremonial expeditions, which we will now consider.

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[1] Similar expeditions are made by the Orissa tribes, the Bhuiya, Juang, Bondo and Gadaba, though these generally have a serious matrimonial purpose alien to Muria tradition.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. THE PUS KOLANG EXPEDITIONS

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The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpar. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

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On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

x883 x484 796 [293]

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog.

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang. 883x 484x

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udaspur they said that the dog was taught to dance. 796

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed. 883x 484x 796

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger. 787

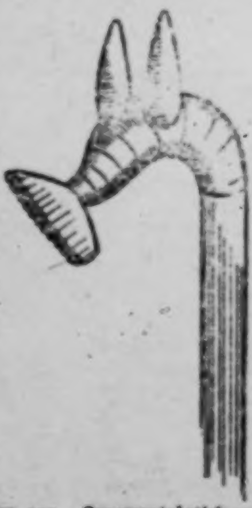

Fig. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions

Full length 2' 7½"

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When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out. 883x 484x 796

This was the custom in Phulpar and Koilibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

X883 X484 words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

796 The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of sonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. [791] Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

X883 X484 796 784 Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

[778] In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

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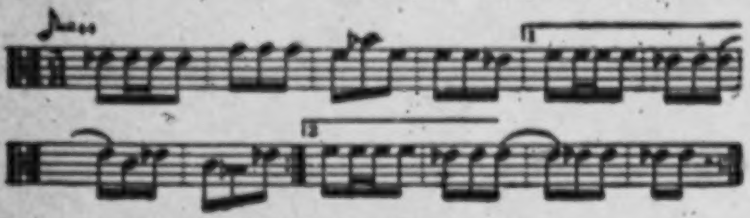
taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalised.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth. 883x 484x 796 784

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang. 883x 484x 796 533 539



Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances. 883x 484x 796 535

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[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 318. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 93.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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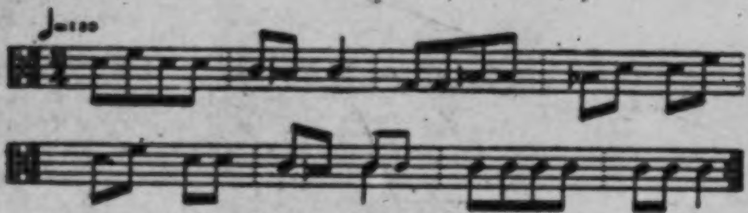
There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

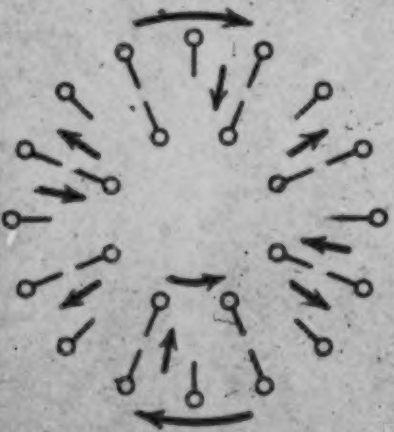
[533]



[539]

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Neturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Daka. *Kāppe* is a bird and *dāka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

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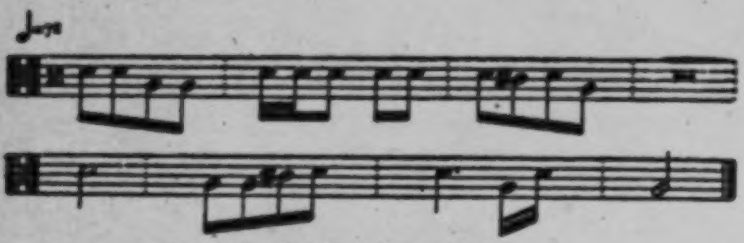
of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.



[533]

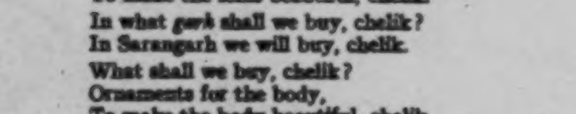
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

[539]

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

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796 their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.
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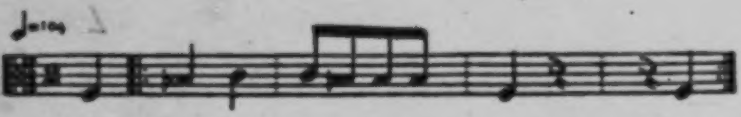
Songs

I

[533]



Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.
[539] At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pite* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Kodibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

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[771] [1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

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Plate XCV

The Watia Karsana

A Chait Dandar dancer

A straw man

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Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI

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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[293]

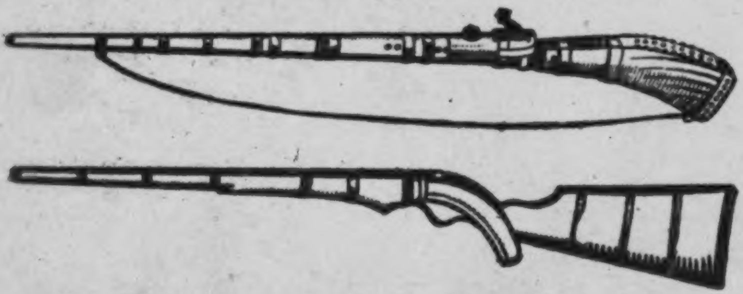

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

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[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150ff.

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[293]

used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symbolize the menarche or nuptial fertility.

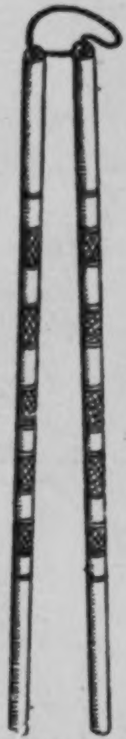
FIG. 119. Dancing-sticks from Remawand

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik.

These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Hurrr* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Koilibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

883x
484x
796
535

[30:]

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

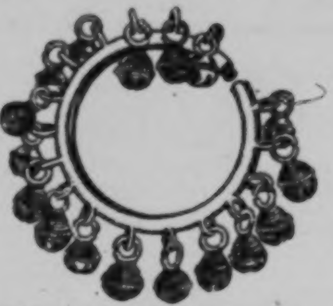

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

[869]

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singir*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Pen Kolang Expeditions

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Between the ordinary Pus Kolang expedition and the Chait Dandar, which I will describe immediately, there is a sort of intermediate dance called the Pen or Deo Kolang. This is danced by boys only, but girls accompany them to do the cooking and keep an eye on them. Just as in the Pus Kolang, the chelik practise their dances, light a fire to test the omens and go to the shrine of the Village Mother to get fire and a spear or axe or bell. When this is done the Gaita buries a ring in front of the shrine.

The boys follow very much the same rules as are observed on the Pus Kolang expeditions and have to observe chastity even with the motiari of their own village. When they return they dance before the Gaita's house and he digs up the ring and returns it to their leader. At Esalnar they said that it was essential that the dancing party should make a complete circle of villages right round their own village. Every boy must dance for at least three years or the gods will be angry with him. At Esalnar, as also in villages south of Narayanpur such as Bakulwahi and Markabera, the dancing-sticks are not slung up across the road but are placed in the Deo-gudi.

The distinctive features then of the Pen Kolang are that girls accompany the party, that a ring is buried, and that the dancing-sticks are placed in the Deo-gudi at the end of the performance.

At Bakulwahi there was a rule that on the last day when the last dance was finished every boy had to throw his stick down at the same time, or they would fall ill.

IV. The Chait Dandar Expeditions

Throughout the east-central and south-eastern villages of the Muria territory the Chait Dandar, Katj Dandar or Mahua Dandar dances take the place of the Pus Kolang. I have already pointed out that as we move east and south from the Jhoria area the cult of Lingo grows progressively weaker and there is thus less inducement to perform the Pus Kolang, which is essentially a dance performed in his honour. The Chait Dandar is a much happier and freer dance than the Pus Kolang. It is not hedged about by a score of taboos and the dread sanctions that enforce them. The essential feature, indeed, of this dance is that boys and girls go out together and that there is no rule forbidding sexual intercourse between members of the same or of different ghotul.

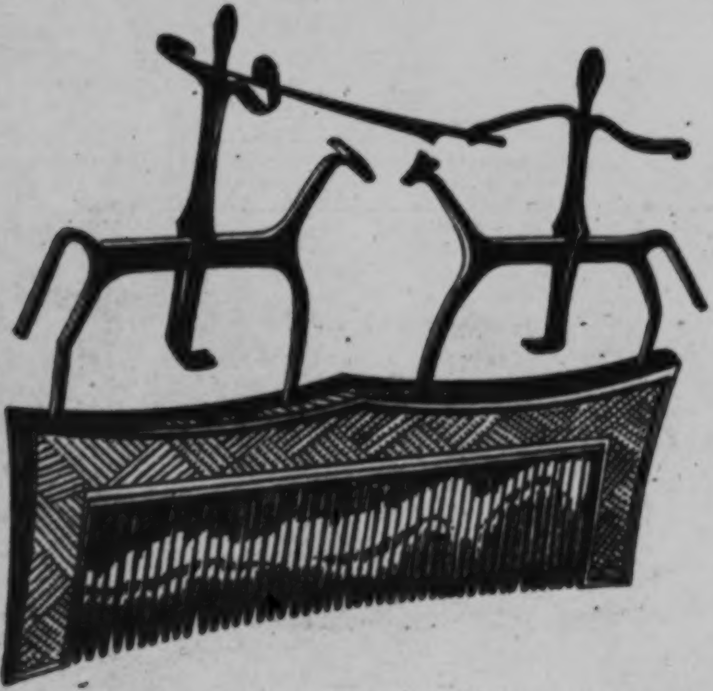
Apart from this the general procedure of the Chait Dandar is not unlike that of the Pus Kolang. Before the chelik and motiari start, they practise for many days in the ghotul—for here too mistakes are dangerous and have to be atoned for. When all is ready they first dance in the ghotul; they then go to the shrine of the Village Mother where they offer liquor to Tallur Muttai saying, 'O Mother Earth, we are but children, teach us to dance well, save us from mistakes'. Then in front of the Gaita's house they dance again and the Gaita digs a hole into which he puts a ring, planting a semur tree above it. In some villages he offers liquor here in the name of Bhimul Pen.

When the boys and girls set out, they cross over a line of sonra rings as usual and promise to give Mother Earth and the Departed offerings if they protect them from magic and evil spirits. In each village they go first to the Gaita and then collect mahua and food from every house. The visitors are entertained in the ghotul; sometimes they are made to dance at once and the ordinary procedure of the evening is omitted; sometimes, however, hosts and visitors interchange their girls for combing and massaging. I doubt if this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

883x
484x
796
535

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.



[412
531]

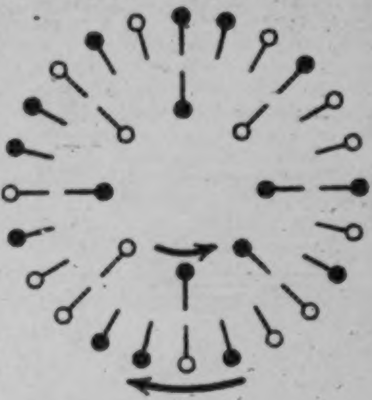
FIG. 121. Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandar* or *kiki* and are usually made of surteli wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

x883
x484
796
535

The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.

The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Muria.



Songs

x883
x484
796
535
539

1

Hun hun hun hun jām kuy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

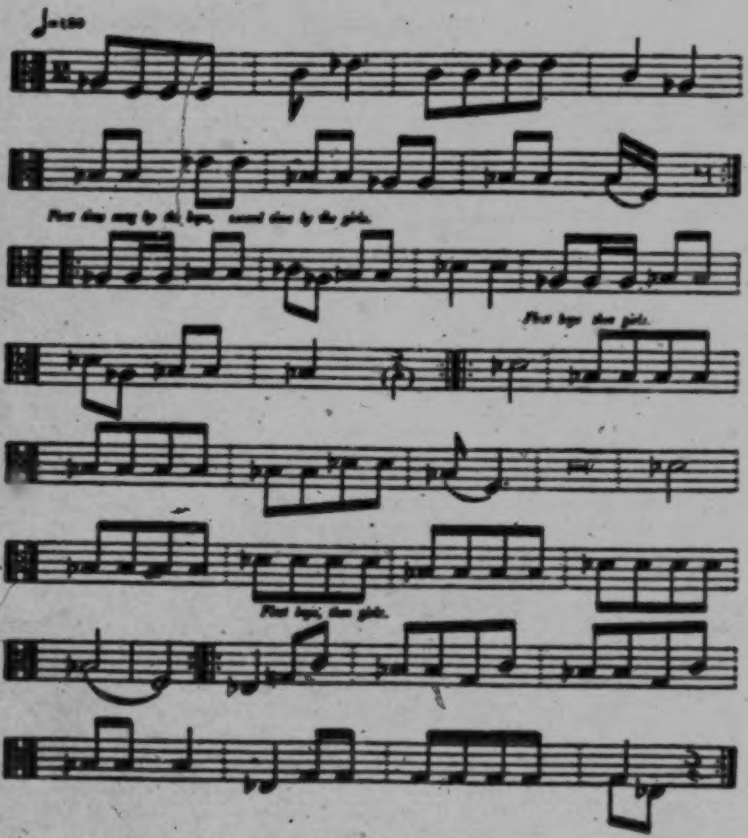
Roy wāyo jām kuy

Don't think about your lover, she
won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance
if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to
sacrifice.

883x
484x
796
535
539

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the
Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding
an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the
Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement
holding his stick.



883x
484x
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533

The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

Song

x383
x484
796
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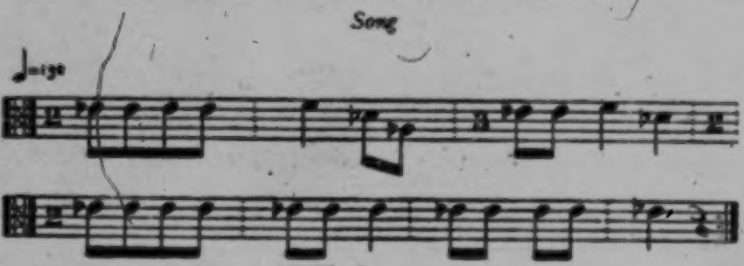
[533]



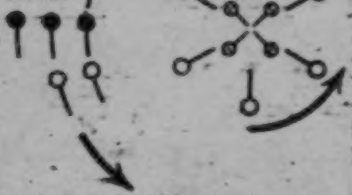
Tari nāna na nāre nāna tari nānāre

[539]

Oho maina ho lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāhon ke danda ho lālsai maina —kāhon ke danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāte paltu ho rāja maina ho lālsai ye bāte paltu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthon dakhu ho rāja maina lālsai ho-tari.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila.

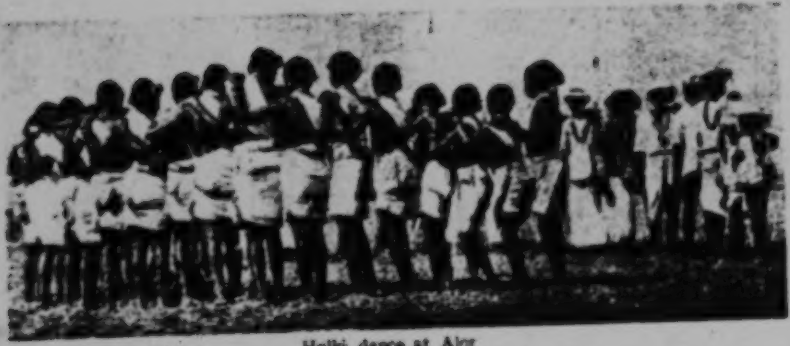
The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.



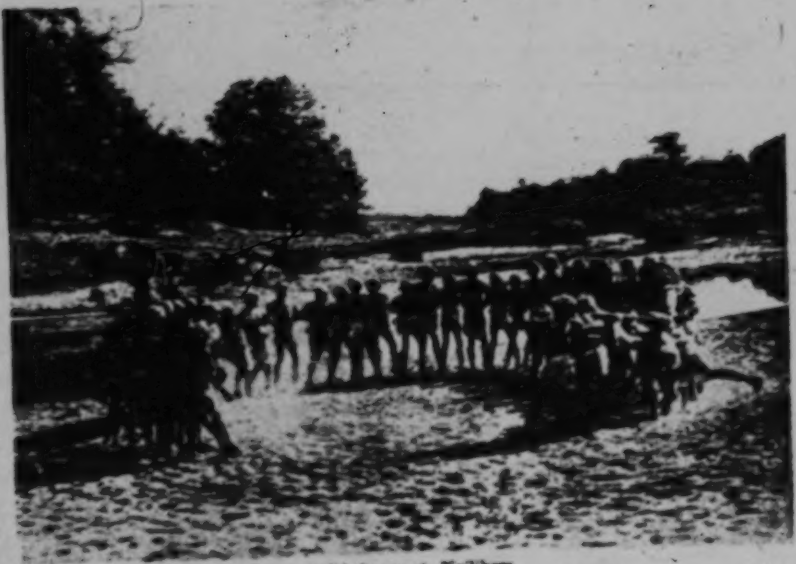
The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

Plate XCVII

X 883
X484
796
535



Hulki dance at Alor



Hulki dance at Koilibera

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Plate XCVIII

Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpuri)

Chait Dandar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

X883	*Porre mettia dippa tondera lālsai.*	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
X484	*Dippa tondsi bāra kewerār lālsai?*	Why is the clearing to be cut?
	Dippa tondsi bāra bitirār lālsai?	What will be sown in that clearing?
796	*Dippa tondsi ganga parbat bitirār lālsai.*	In that clearing *ganga parbat* seed will be sown.
535	*Ganga bitsi bāra kewerār lālsai?*	What shall we do with that seed?
	Ganga pungār jhela jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

539 The *ganga parbat* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na,
kanhaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandhi parewān ho?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove?
Kaise rowen manjur?	And how does my peacock cry?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandhi parewān ho;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove;
Dhoke dhoke manjur.	O *dhoke dhoke* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandhi parewān ho?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kay chāra charen manjur?	What food has my peacock?
Bhala gotin charen more pandhi parewān ho;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala kaisen sowen more pandhi parewān ho?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kaise sowen manjur?	How sleeps my peacock?
Bhala gura me sowen more pandhi parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests;
Jhāre me sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandhi parewān ho?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur?	And where does my peacock drink?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandhi parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

X883 There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions.
X484 Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch.
796 During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed.
535 In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

x883
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You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V.. THE DIWALI DANCES

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

FIG. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

[531
293]

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

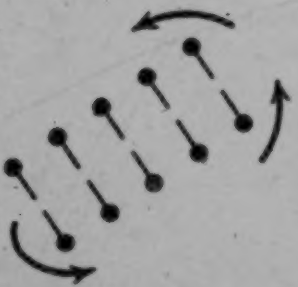
Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met his bride when she came from Markabera to dance. He took her three times to the jungle. 883x

I will now trace the experiences of a party of these dancers as they go out from their village. 484x

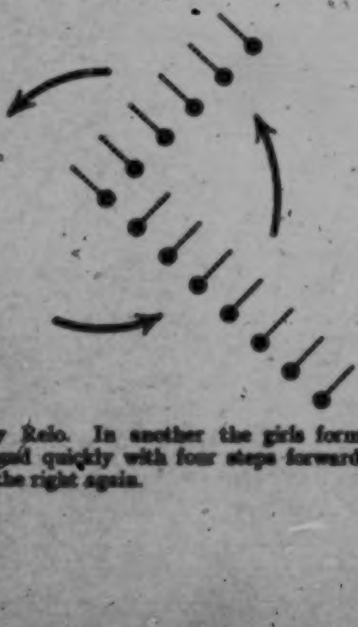
For days discussions in the ghotul have centred round the girls' programme. Some of the girls have definite villages in mind; there is a handsome boy glimpsed for a moment at a last year's wedding: here is a famous drummer and singer whom they all admire. The chelik are more concerned that their motiari will be properly fed and cared for. 'Last year such and such a village was very mean; don't go there this time,' they say. 'But that village gave you pork and a little ghee, it is worth a second visit.' The girls too have their memories, different ones. They have to consider too the prevailing clans, and the *bhum* of the places they propose to see. At last the programme is settled. The motiari are to go to seven villages and return home on the eighth day. 796 535

On the morning of their departure, the girls go to the shrine of the Village Mother, and the Gaita offers incense and promises food-sacrifice if they return safely. The girl leader, carrying an ornamented axe over her shoulder, takes fire from the shrine in a coil of rice-straw. She must preserve this fire throughout the tour. Other girls must not touch either the axe or fire, for they represent the village god. Then the Gaita takes the party to the boundary of the village and makes a line across the path, on which he puts little piles of rice, and seven rings of *sonra* leaf with some iron slag. Over this the girls step in single file while the Gaita prays, addressing all the gods of that part and the Departed, 'Our girls go out to dance the Diwali dance. Let them go well, let them come well. Let there be no fever, cough or cold. If they come unharmed, we will give you liquor, incense, eggs, a cock. They are going to a strange country; let them have no trouble. It is your duty to see to this'. And then with a sudden change of tone, 'If they return with fever, cough or cold, I will piss in your face'.



By now the girls have passed and the Gaita says no more to them, for they must go on their way without once looking round.

Presently they reach the first village on their tour programme. They go straight to the Gaita's house, pile their belongings, their extra wraps, their big baskets for collecting food, under a tree, and begin to dance. The Diwali dance takes several forms. One is a slow, monotonous dance, in a circle, clapping the hands and singing, mostly Relo. In another the girls form themselves into two rows and move round quickly with four steps forward and to the right, two back, then four to the right again.



x883
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[539]

In Sidhawand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora suta pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni kāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir kāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lehka mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy kāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy kāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luwur minu kubnāh roy kāri gurti;	*Luwur* fish are swimming in it; blackbird;
Nāri minu targanāh roy kāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

883^{x}
484^{x}
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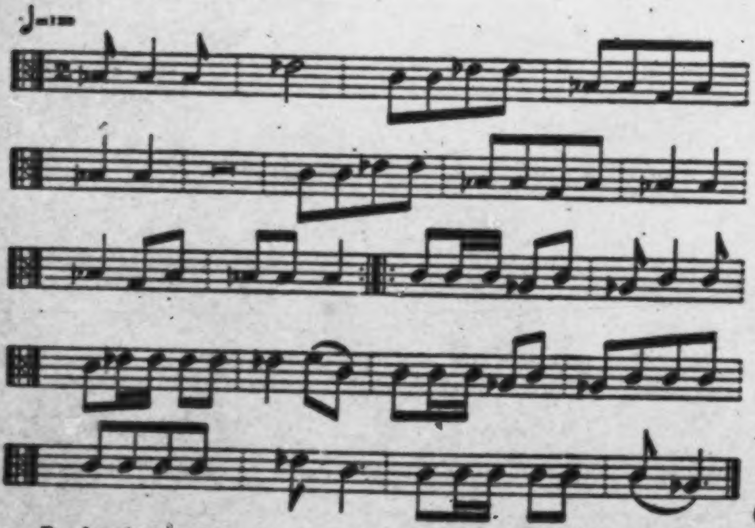
After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



[533]

Banda rola pungār wo āya.	In the lake there is a flower.
Pungār mikichkīla dūhāgo āya.	I go to put it in my hair.
Nīma icho hamma wo nani.	Don't go, little daughter.
Bona suda daki wo nani?	Who will go with you there?

883^{x}
484^{x}
796
535
539

x 883 *Māmān marri mantor go āya;*	There is my *māma*'s son:
x 484 *Ona suda dāha wo āya.*	I will go with him.
Tāra nāwa sandra go āya.	Give me my *sandra* cloth.
Sandra nana uhka go āya.	I will wear my cloth.
796 *Kosa wāri polka go āya;*	The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
Tāra nāwa polka go āya.	Bring me that jacket.
535 *Wāler igāda tukil wo āya;*	The basket was made by the Nahar;
Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya.	Give me my basket.
539 *Muyāng end-leng kocha go āya;*	The measure has little bells round it;
Tāra nāwa kocha go āya.	Bring me the measure.
Kawdāng end-leng humār go āya;	The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
Tāra nāwa humār go āya.	Bring me the *gundri*.
Hupe lolor wati go āya!	O the jungle clearing of the rats!
Hupe lehhā dāha go āya.	Like a rat I will go.
Nana waronāy aiona āya.	I will go all alone.
Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya.	For everyone has left me.
Kape kanhār bera go āya,	Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
Kape lekha parriya ha āya.	Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele?	Whence are these pigeons?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele.	The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele?	Where have the pigeons settled?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda.	In the Gaita's court.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele,	In front of his fence,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele.	There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Tuma phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Kākri phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Mogra phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Keowra phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *keora*, boys.
Chameli phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Gulāp phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Āma phul sitārām hayde layor.	Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munke re korha kiton;	In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Perke na purha kiton, dāda.	Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
Murwise pāi jaliyal, dāda.	The peacock is on the roof, brother.
Pinjora le maina kiton, dāda.	The maina is in its cage, brother.
Rachāte gāda kiton, dāda.	The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latite howe kiton, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.
Nawchāre pāt te chidral, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.
Kena ye manwān āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!
Dalate hesa himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,
Kāwir te hitāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.
Jiwa tun hami kema, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.
Niyare poroy poykom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.

883x
484x
796
535
539

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wāterom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawra muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāha wāterom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātekroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāha wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ha hewerom dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

883x
484x
796
535

In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

X883
X484
796
535

Here were sitting the Gaita and a Siraha; across the path was the usual line of ash, a row of tiny green rings of aonra leaf, bits of egg-shell.[1] We sat and waited. Suddenly out of the jungle came the line of motiari, eighteen of them, bearing themselves most proudly, their rows of silvered combs and ornaments shining in the evening light. The chelik smiled in welcome and delight. It was an unforgettable moment.

The first girl reached the line across the path and squatted down before it. The Siraha fell into trance asking the gods if all was well. The leader of the chelik waved two chickens round her head and she was allowed to pass. The other girls stepped directly over the line, one by one in single file. They put their bundles in the ghotul, then went to the Gaita's house and began to dance and sing. They were weary and hoarse after their week's continual singing, but they danced for half an hour, and then made an end.

Now night was falling, and the boys in great excitement went back to the jungle and finished cooking the feast. Two big girls, who had been in their menstrual period—as the boys informed me at the top of their voices—and so could not go on the trip, were making leaf-plates and cups. Soon the motiari came and sat in a long line; boys ran to and fro with torches. The chelik first served palm wine, then bits of highly chillied pork and rice on leaf-plates. My wife sat and ate with the girls; I had a place to myself near the fire, and enjoyed the feast as much as anyone. The flavour of the food was excellent and it was well cooked; at least it did me no harm.

The elders of the village also came and even some of the Ganda and Kalar. When they and the girls had eaten, the chelik were able to sit and take their supper. At last all went to the ghotul. They were too tired and excited to dance; they lay down together and slept.

On the evening of the following day, the girls gave a feast to the boys in the same place, using the rice and pulse that they had collected on their expedition.

At Bandopal, the chelik made a feast for the girls in a shed on the edge of a field near the village. They cooked rice, pulse and fish, crabs and frogs that the boys had caught specially for the feast. When the motiari assembled, they were given liquor. Then, holding the leaf-cups in one hand, they saluted the chelik with the other. After this the Jhoria, head of the chelik, asked the girls where they had been, what food they had been given, what entertainment they had received, and whether there had been any trouble or sickness on the way. The girls gave a lively account of everything that had happened, describing how they had been given here a chicken, there a pig, and here had been meanly received. The Jhoria declared that when girls or boys came from those villages they would be treated as they had treated them.

In Bandopal, the purification ceremony was not held on arrival but the following morning. The girls were taken outside the village by the Gaita and the boys. The Gaita made the usual line of ash, and sacrificed liquor, eggs and chickens. Some branches were placed across the path and the girls told to step over them and go home. As they went the chelik hit them on the back 'to drive away disease'.

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[1] When Juang return from similar expeditions, at a cross-roads near the village boundary a line of date palm leaves, bhoir thorns, and an ebony branch is made across the path. The leader says, 'Whatever devils are dancing after us, let them return hence and follow us no more'. Each dancer in turn spits and steps across the line and so goes home without looking round. The Juang do this even on ordinary occasions when they return after a visit to another village. The Savara, and I have no doubt many other tribes also, take similar precautions whenever they visit other villages for a ceremonial purpose.

Plate XCIX

X 883
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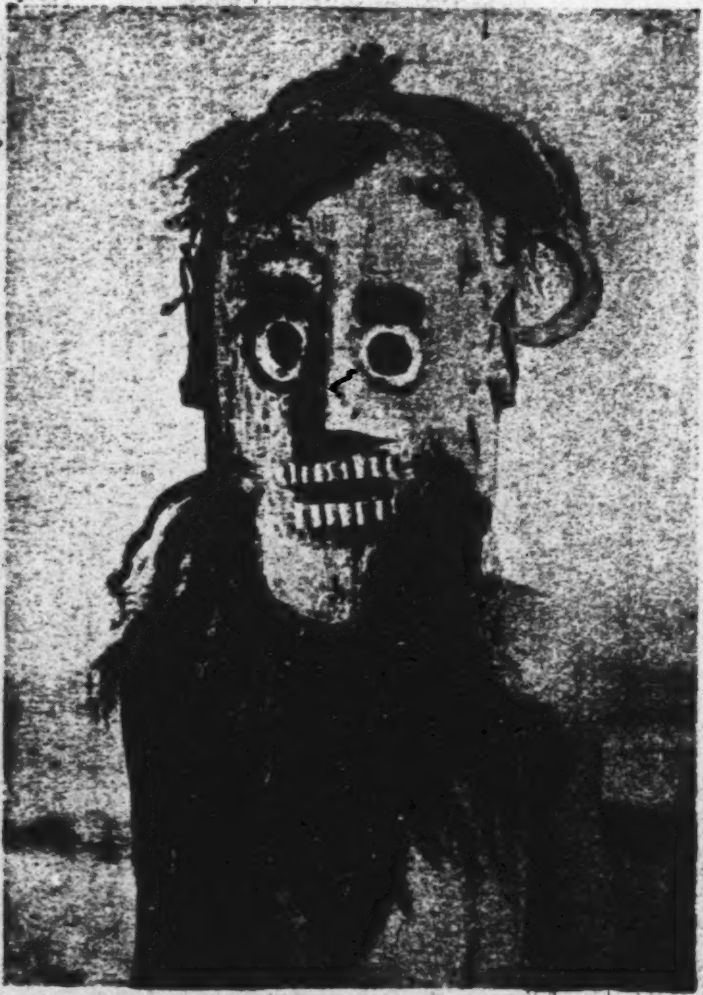
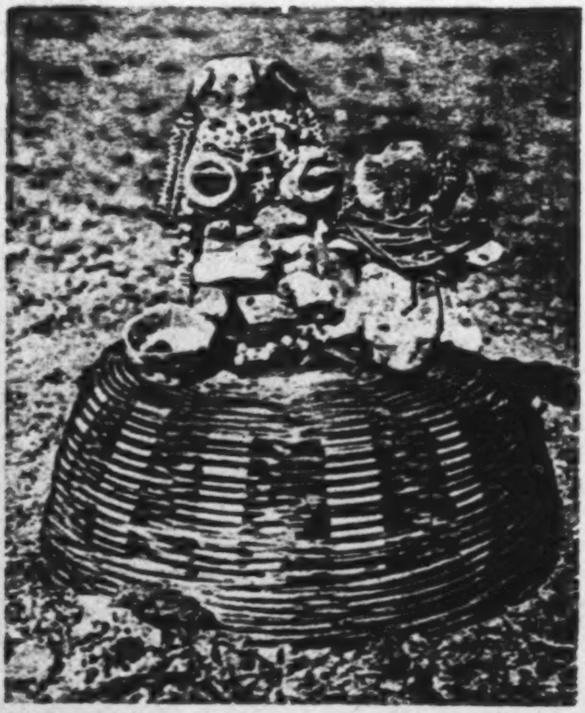


Mask used in Chherta dance (From Berma)

[p. 508 (A)]

53✓

Plate C



Earthen dolls from Phauda

Malko and Dulosa with earthen dolls at Chandabera

[p. 508 (B)]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

VI. The Hulki Dances

x883
484
796
535

As we move east, the custom of allowing girls to go to dance by themselves from village to village at Diwali gradually weakens. Indeed the Diwali dance of the girls is almost co-terminal with the Pus Kolang dance, although in isolated villages like Surma in eastern Kondagaon the Diwali is still kept up. Where it has died out, its place is often taken by the Hulki expedition. Just as the Chait Dandar has replaced the Pus Kolang and boys and girls go together instead of boys only, so the Hulki replaces the Diwali dance and boys and girls go together instead of girls only. The Hulki expedition is sometimes made in the ordinary way and boys and girls go out for a week's tour; sometimes they simply go out for the day or for a long evening to neighbouring villages and return to their own ghotul to sleep. There is no special decoration worn, except that boys put on all the clothes they have and the girls adorn themselves with their prettiest ornaments.

When they start, the dancers perform the same sort of ceremonies for their protection and success as is done in the other dances. A line of rings is made and the Gaita promises suitable offerings if the party returns safely. The leader of the party, who is still called the Gain, prays, 'May our song and dance be good, may the rhythm keep time, may the tune not be spoilt, let no witch or magician injure us, let us not be attacked by Arjatta Parjatta, Bhut, Massan, Jurelin, Mirchuk, Matia of other villages. May the gods of the villages we visit not trouble us'.

The visitors dance and collect food and liquor as usual and are generally joined by the boys and girls of the village they are visiting. Hosts dance in one line, visitors in another. At Bhandarsiuni they sang a song in honour of Lingo. When the Bhandarsiuni party, which included many big boys but only very little girls, visited Sirpuri on 28 October, 1941, it was amusing to note how bored the Sirpuri *boys* were with the visit, though the Sirpuri girls bustled about with great excitement to arrange entertainment for their visitors.

When the boys go for Hulki, with perhaps only a few girls, the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted.

Often the members of the two ghotul dance together. It was at such a time that the Jholer of Morenga—and many another—met his bride. 'I went to dance at Mundpal and a girl pushed her way through the crowd and danced beside me. I put my arm round her and rested my hand on her breast. Later I gave her liquor to drink and we slipped away into the jungle. After a few months, we ran away together and were married.'

The actual dance, which is called Hulki or Kokti, is a serpentine promenade in which boys and girls, clasped in each other's arms, combine a rhythmic movement with all sorts of fun. It is a quick and jolly dance, delightful to watch and, I suspect, entrancing (provided the circumstances are right) to dance.

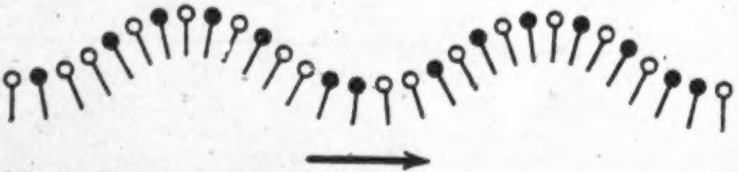
Boys and girls form a long line all facing one way. They hold each other by placing the right arm lightly across the right-hand neighbour's bottom, while the left hand holds the right arm of the left-hand neighbour but one which is, of course, resting across the immediate left-hand neighbour's back. The method is most easily understood by looking at Plate CXIII. The dance often begins with only boys holding each other rather loosely with a wide inviting space between each pair. Girls one by one burrow in, pushing their heads down under the boys' arms. The dance is so intimate that girls have to see who their neighbours are; they ought not to have on either side of them a member of their own clan or a relative of some forbidden degree.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

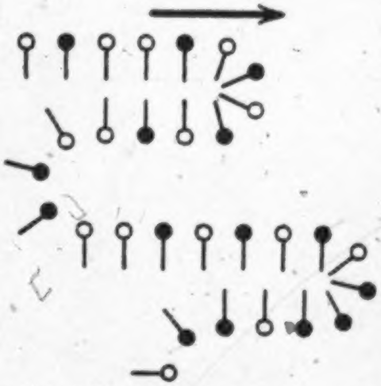
x883
x484
796
535

The line moves to left or right with a very simple, rapid step sideways. The dancers generally keep perfect step, and all the legs come over together in a delightful way. The line reverses its direction with a loud cry of *Jai keonra jai mongra* (as if we were to cry 'Victory to the lily and the rose!') or *Hurĕ hurĕ hurĕ, Sālĕ sālĕ sālĕ*, or even a sharp barking noise.

Now the line that began like this—

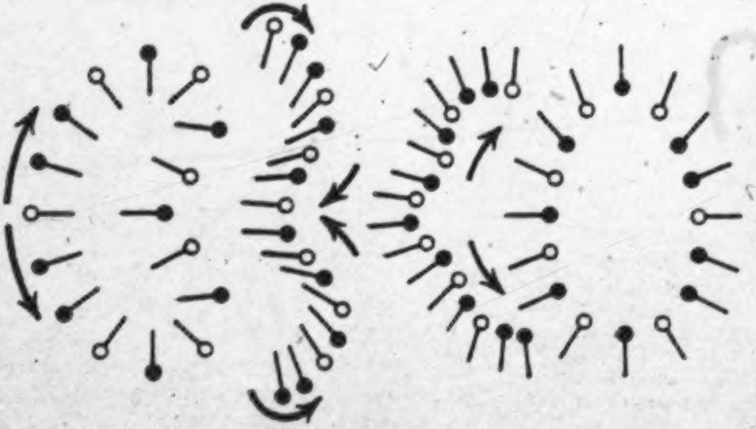


winds round and back on itself, like this—



This, of course, is great fun; when the line winds back the dancers all bump their behinds against each other; the leader suddenly ducks under a gap in the line and makes it thread through itself; he begins to go very fast or tries to pull the line over, and there is a regular tug-of-war; they form into a big circle, head and tail of the line joining hands, first facing inwards, then with a movement like pulling a glove inside out they turn themselves into a circle facing outwards

All the time the quick, fresh, even step never changes—so long as the song remains the same. But at last the dancers change to a *Nāna nāna rĕ* motif, and then the step gets more of a swing in it, until at the end it



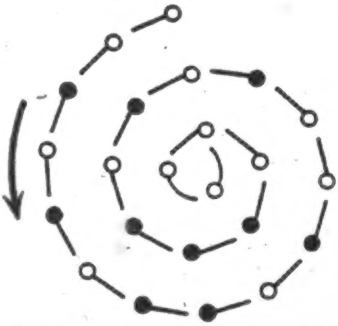
develops into a new movement—three steps to the left with a skip on the third step, then one step back to the right on the right foot with a good swing, half-left with the left foot which then goes back directly to the left. This is a pleasant change. Finally the line spaces itself out; the boys and girls resign their happy intimacy and stretch out hand in hand, whereon they repeat the same steps and movements.

883x
484x
796
535

In Pupgaon the head and the tail of the line each held sticks; at one point they met and held each other's sticks; the rest of the line had first to pass over them and then below, after which they worked round again into a complete circle.

Some of the best Hulki dancing I have seen, vigorous, precisely regular, dramatic, exciting, was at Alor. The boys and girls stood in line facing forwards, each with the left hand on the shoulder of the one in front, thus giving a slightly 'half-right' inclination. The steps were five paces forward, right foot up to left and half back; five paces back, left back to right and half forward; five paces forward and so continue; reverse at a shout; five paces back, left foot swung in and out.

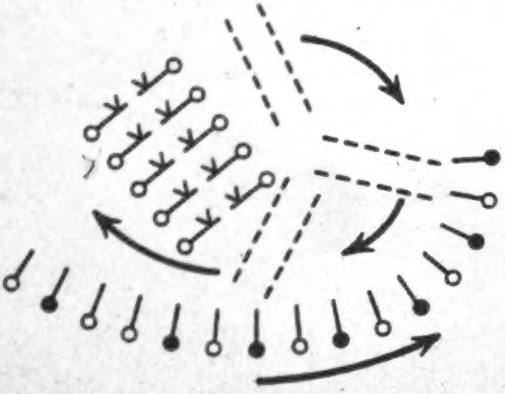
Sometimes the Hulki line rolls itself up like a centipede—



In fact there is no limit to what the Hulki dancers cannot do. It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun.

In the north of Kondagaon Tahsil (I have seen it at Sidhawand and Amgaon, but only there) the Hulki is danced with drums, small *hulki-māndri* which the boys grasp with the left hand and beat very fast with the right. The drummers form two lines facing each other, while the girls and the rest of the boys form the usual Hulki line (see below).

The Hulki songs bear little relation to the dance. Those sung in the earlier stages have the refrain *Silip rēle role role*; those sung later have the refrain *Arè tina nāmur nāna re.*



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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

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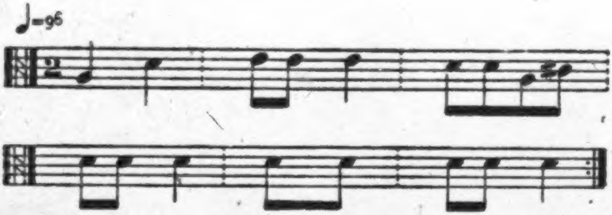

X
883
X484
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539

Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho !	O the sixteenfold earth and the nine-fold heaven!
Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?	Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?
Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.	Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.
Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho !	O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!
Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.	The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.
Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.	The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.
Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poyiom ho.	At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.
Hongu dāpu āyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.	Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring koring bāder roy.	Clouds are over heaven.
Poron bāder poyndu roy.	The sky is overcast with clouds.
Darka pirru dar dar roy,	The rain comes pouring down,
Jimti piru jim jim roy.	Then drizzles drop by drop.
Dori usa handu roy,	Towards the sunset flows a flood,
Dakka pehchor handu roy.	Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokore.	Let us play *dudu* in the dust.
Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?	Are you coming to play *dudu*?
Dud karsi wayeni he bai,	I would like to come, but I can't,
Wāyon āyo wāyena he dāda;	Mother is in the house;
Lone dai manta roy he dāda.	She will be angry with me.
Niya dai matek roy he bai.	Don't bother about her.
Sura weri jhāpi roy he bai;	The basket has seven chains;
Jhāpite sandra hitona he bai.	I have put cloth into the basket.
Baske wane hitoni he dāda?	When did you give it?
Konem wedur joli roy he bai;	When you were in your cradle;

X883
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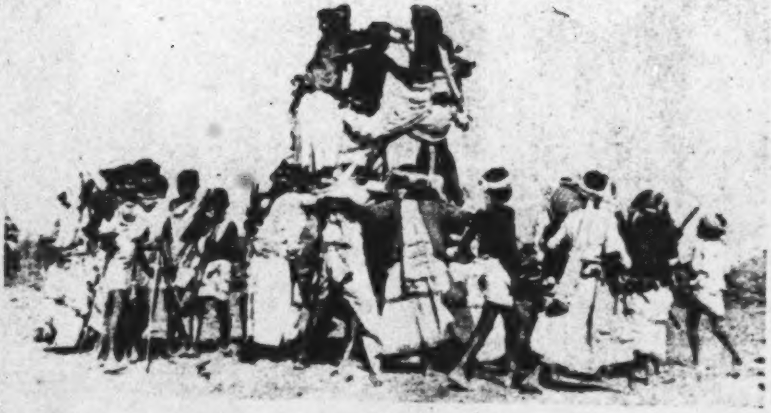
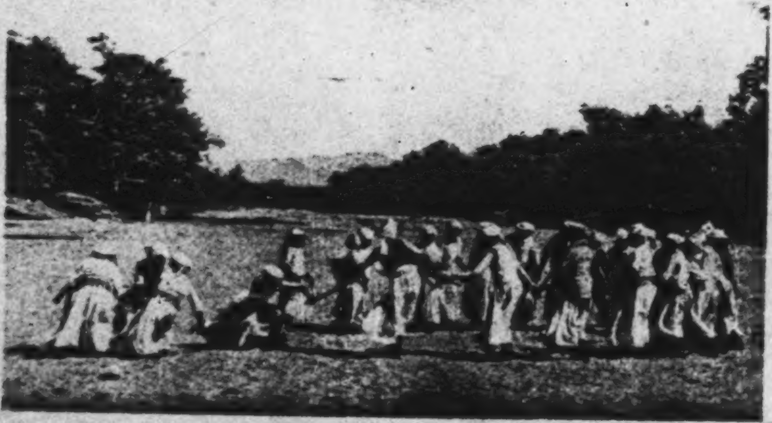


Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance



Pus Kolang: the Kokothar dance at Koilibera

[p. 512 (A)]

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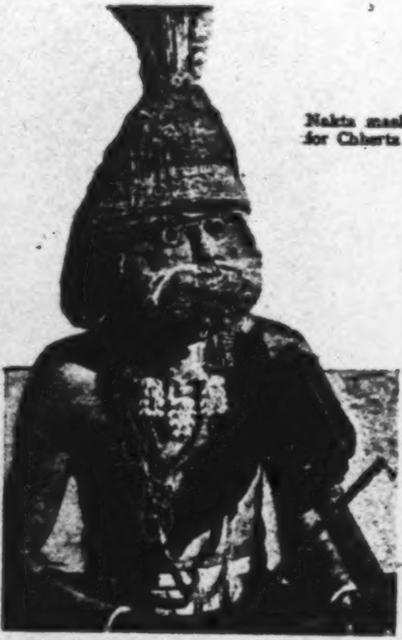

Nakta mask used for Chherta dance

Plate CII

Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder

[p. 512 (B)]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

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535
539

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,	You were swinging in your cradle,
Aske nana hitona he bai.	Then I put the cloth for you.
Sandra ise-hitek roy he dāda,	If you have given cloth, brother,
Nana ise wāyka roy he dāda,	Then I will come, brother,
Jori ise āyhāt roy he dāda.	And we will live as yoke-fellows, brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni hai men lure jāy ho?	Where is the bear's queenly daughter?
Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.	She is playing on the hill.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?	Where is she drawing water?
Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.	She is drawing it from the tank.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?	Where does she sleep?
Bhālur beti rāni dorgi men sutela jāy ho.	The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.	O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.
Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno hor ho;	I don't know the way, brother;
Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.	Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.
Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.	O water-girl, tell me the way.
Kor me khele kor larha larka la puch lebe ho.	O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.
He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?	Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?
Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,	Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,
Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,
Jawra bawnra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,
Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where an elephant is tied to a pole,
Ala me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a horse is tied in the shed,
Lewa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,
Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where the cows are shut in the shed,
Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,
Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,
Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a maina sings in its cage,

x883 *Kat me to suwa bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,*	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
x484 *He bai thakurain thākur kahān gais re ho?*	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
796 535 *Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja ke sewa gais re ho.*	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
539 *Kaiya tere kaiya bhāji nadi tir ke kaiya re ho.*	The *kahuwa* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir ke keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai ke airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke peri pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tohār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tohār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dor dhamki te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekta gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yeklā di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig !
Turjing arta bharri te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te kormal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nikun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

883x
796
535
293

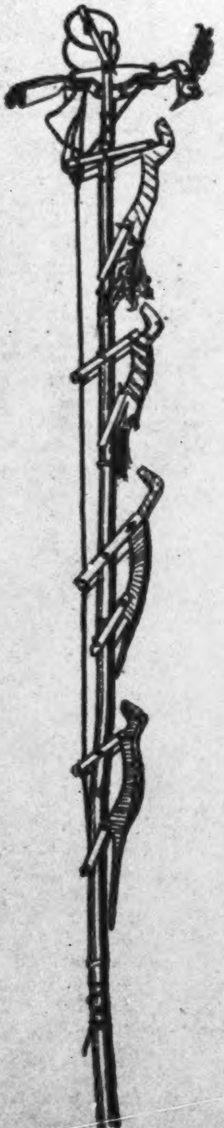

Fig. 123. Toy used on Chherta expeditions
Length 6' 6"

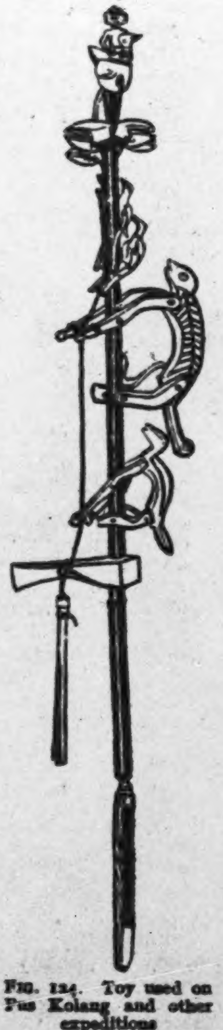

Fig. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4' 6"

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. The Chherta Dance

X 883
484
796
535

As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. In enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Koilibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

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[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

883x
484x
796
535

[534
532]

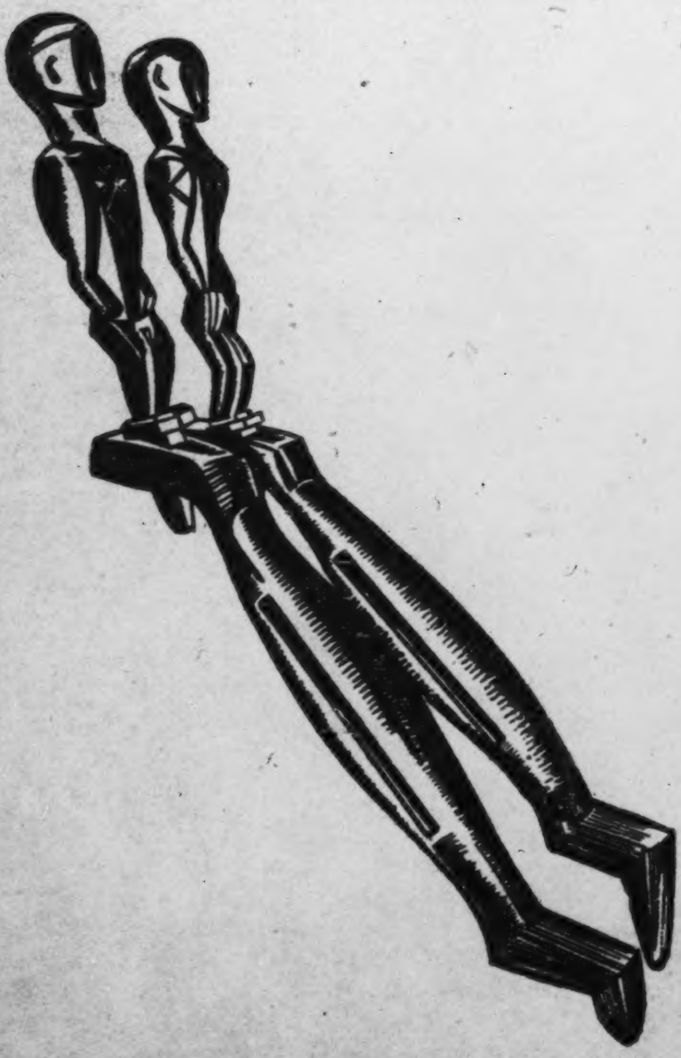

Fig. 125. Gongs from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
X484
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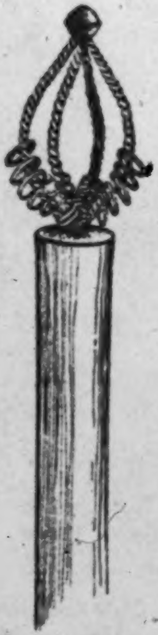


[243]

FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

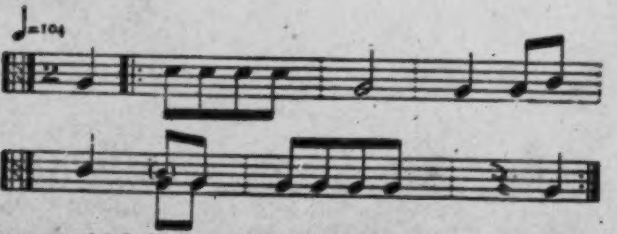
In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4" peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½" from the base. The female is ½" shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2' 6½" from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½" long, ¾" broad and 2" deep.

Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I



[533]

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[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

883x
484x
796
535
539

Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.	The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.
Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.	Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.
Khat kurha cho kānta kuta; kalār gharo bhātti bhātti;	There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;
Bhātti cho mundi he āg lage; pinda he chābli chāti chāti.	The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.
Bhubute bhuku hai kuwāri dengur cho bhuku ho ho.	There are maggots in the new ant-hill.
Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duhu ho ho.	The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.
Kar harāti harāti pipar pān cho deti deti.	The pipal leaf has nipples.
Chirak charak mand bache jāt kalāring beti ho ho;	The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;
Tan tan rupaiya gine kalāring bai ho ho jām kuy.	She is counting her rupees *tan tan*.

2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.	*Jhirliti jhirliti*, the pigeon killed the sparrow.
Dokara dokari jhagra kola chāpun dila luthi.	The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.
Ao dokari chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.	Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.
Roti pitha hai karhun? Bare bāp he beti.	What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.
Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.	On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.
Gāra cheghi hākdela sidhāwandiya pila.	To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.
Amli boti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.	The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.
Mācha cheghi hākdela duyi māma bhācha.	The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.
Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār bāri.	On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.
Ye gaon cho lekimanke kolepa nilo ari,	The children of this village were carried away by a fox,
Kolepa cho beta beti amhe balla dādi.	And its children will call us grandfather.
Chher chherta ki mer mera, bāman dorgoda.	*Chher chherta ki mer mera, bāman dorgoda.*
Donga dāda yete rala pawli adgada.	A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.
Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.	The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.
Jhathe bida dez kāka tucho mai cho pudi.	Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

x883 x484	*Pāni suna pāni suna lendi barli duna.*	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
796	*Ayele pār cho kokoda paile paile jayse.*	Cranes from here go to the other side.
535	*Paile pār cho rāut leka māron māron khāyse.*	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
539	*Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.*	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
	Tucho beta ke dakhle māma sānjh bera.	I saw your son, at evening time.
	Adan lasa dhaura lasa pondhke dharli hasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
	Aware bai chikan khosa, bhelwān tel ke ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
	Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
	Mahādeo ke parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

883x
DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important 517
business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of 868
its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, 776
as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history 533
and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the 535
Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken[1] and barren districts 883x
of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', 578
as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

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[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

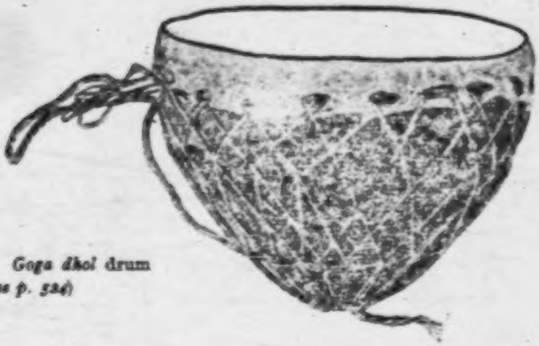


Fig. 127. *Goga dhol* drum
(*See p. 524*)

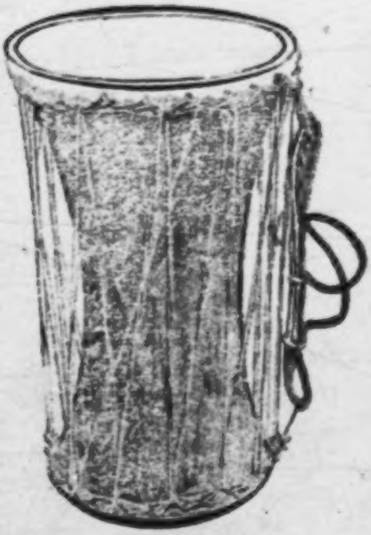


Fig. 128. *Parrang* drum
(*See p. 525*)

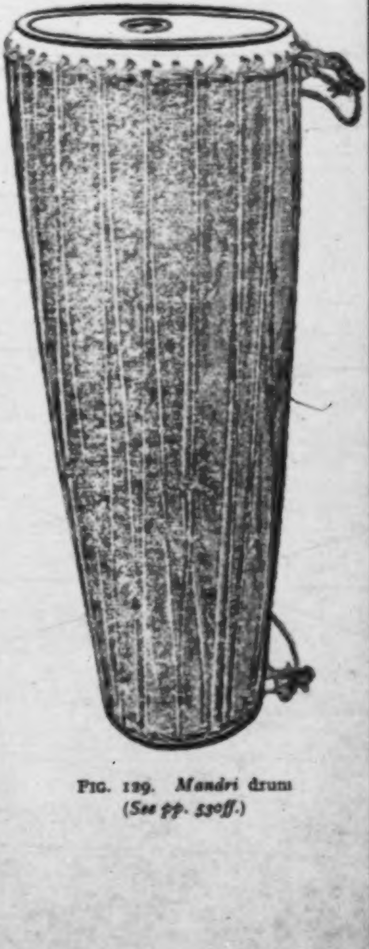


Fig. 129. *Mandri* drum
(*See pp. 530ff.*)

DANCE AND SONG

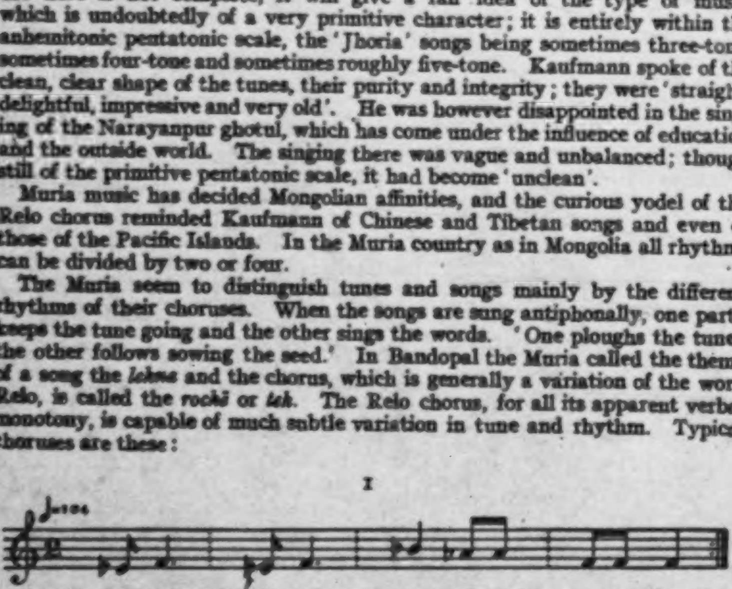
I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Panku of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance. 883x 578

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'. 883x 535 533

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four. 883x 533

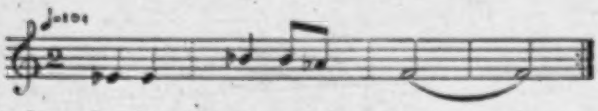
The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *lekna* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rochi* or *teh*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

I


♩=104
Rere loyo rere la rerela rela. Rere loyo rerela rere rela rela.

x883
533

2



O rere loyo rela rela. Re re loyo re rela. Re re loyo rerela. O rerela rela rela rerela rela rererela rerela rela rerelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

x883
534

Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *măwăloti* or *lohăti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[524]

Kaide nehtihe bita mend dănia,	Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargăte hiteke hos mend dănia.	Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

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[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

4. *The mandri drum.*—This is the chelik's favourite drum, the marriage drum. In shape it is a long barrel of wood, with two membranes of unequal size. It is so important to the life of the ghotul that I describe its manufacture and use in a separate section.

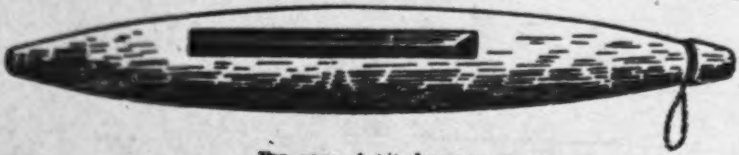

FIG. 130. A *pitorka* gong

5. *The parrang drum.*—This is a waisted drum of earthenware, shaped like an hour-glass, 18" to 2' long with a cow-hide cover of 9" at either end. It is used as a substitute for the mandri in some villages. It is also called *tori parra*, *parrai*[1] or *parrayin*.

There is a wooden variety of this drum, smaller but of the same pattern, called *hulki mândri*, *ojha parra* or *damru*. The first name derives from its use in the Hulki dance, the second because it is played by the wandering minstrel Ojha. The drum is a little under a foot long; the ends have a diameter of 6" and narrow to 3" at the waist. It is hollowed out of a single piece of wood. Lizard-skin membranes at either end are fixed in place by rings of bamboo and tied by a cord that is crisscrossed round the drum. A leather belt, to which is attached a carved wooden peg, passes round the waist and is held by the left hand.

This is the Muria version of the widely-distributed *dâmaru* used by beggars all over India. In its very small shape it has a stick or stone tied to a string: it is shaken and the stone strikes each head in turn. In Madras it is called *udakkai*.

6. *The turburi drum.*—This small earthenware drum, hemispherical in shape, is also called *kundur*, *kundri*, *kundurka* and *kundori*. Its Muria form is a sophisticated version of the Hill Maria *turam* drum made by them of sago palm or bija wood. Its single membrane is of cow-hide. It is tied to the waist and beaten with two sticks at festivals. (See Plate CX.)

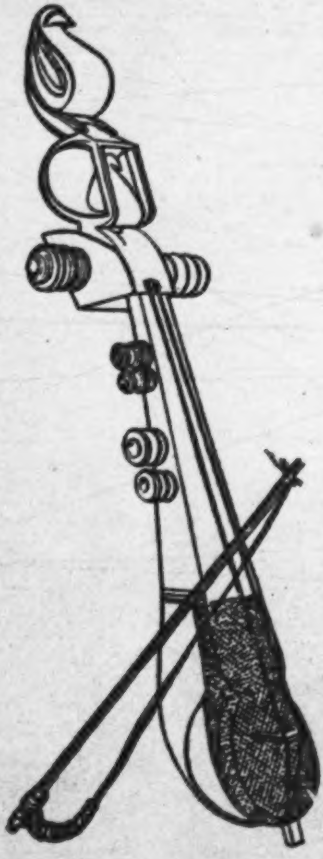

FIG. 131. A *sarangi*
(*See p. 526*)

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[1] *Parai* is a Tamil word for a drum, from which the Paraiyan caste may possibly get its name.

7. *The pitorka gong.*—This is a wooden gong, also called *tudra*, *kutorka* and *thuturka*, which seems to have developed out of the wooden cow-bell. But this hollowed-out, membraneless instrument differs from the cow-bell in having no clapper; it is beaten with two sticks during marriage dances and makes a sharp penetrating noise. The name *pitorka* means a bulbul. Riddles about the gong are:

> *Hayle kor kara kara inia.* The dead cock cries *kara kara.*
> The cock's belly is removed, but it goes on crying for food.

It is this class of instrument that gives most scope to the chelik for carving the little decorations and symbols of which they are so fond. The gongs often have small mirrors fitted into the wood, carvings of tigers, birds, chelik and motiari, and crude drawings of the vagina (Fig. 141). The heavy cow-bell type of *pitorka* is often fairly large; one in my possession measures 21" by 10½", another 23" by 14", a third 27½" by 14". Sometimes the *pitorka* takes the shape of a hollowed-out canoe (Fig. 130). I have one that is 26" long with a slit 10" long, 3" deep and 1" across. A small hole is made in the bottom of the slit to improve the tone.[1]

The wood used is generally semur or siuna. A chelik goes to the tree and throws rice and pulse at it in the name of Lingo. 'To improve the sound', the gong is worshipped with oil and haldi before a marriage.

8. *The sarangi.*—A fiddle of the ordinary Indian pattern, made of a single block of wood, with a hollowed-out belly. The Muria sometimes carve a bird at the top (Fig. 131).

9. *The dhusir.*—This is another type of fiddle with a bamboo neck attached to a resonator made of half a coconut. This is covered with lizard skin. The strings are of horse-hair. The instrument is held to the shoulder and played with a bamboo bow which has horse-hair strings.

10. *The toheli.*—This resembles the Indian *sitar*. A bamboo neck is attached to a gourd resonator. It is played specially in honour of Bara Pen and Bangaram.

11. *The dumri.*—A guitar made of a thick board over which brass strings are tied, with a large gourd resonator. It is held with one hand and the strings are plucked with the other. If any of these stringed instruments are played at a wedding, they are first worshipped with oil and haldi in the name of Lingo.

12. *The hakum hunting-horn.*—Originally this was an ordinary buffalo horn, and still many of them may be seen slung from the roofs of shrines. They are blown at festivals to announce the arrival of a god or to mark any important turn of the ceremonial. The Ghasia make an elaborate brass horn by the *cire-perdue* process, which is eagerly bought by those Muria who can afford it. Such brass horns are common in Madras, where they are called *kombu*, and in Nepal under the name of *sringa*.

13. *The solor flute.*—This is also called *halur* and *husor* in Gondi and *bansuri* in Halbi. It is a cylindrical bamboo tube with from four to six stops. Among the Muria flutes in my possession, one is 3' long. It is closed by the

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[1] This appears to be a miniature edition of the large wooden xylophone made from a hollow log and sometimes called a canoe-drum which is frequently found in the Naga Hills, among the Wa of Burma, in the Malay Peninsula and in Borneo. Hutton connects it with the Fijian *lali*. 'It may be associated with the use of the war canoe, as its construction appears to be attended in the Naga Hills by taboos identical with those attending the construction of canoes in Melanesia; and canoes have been used, occasionally at any rate, for drumming in Manipur, in Papua and in Oceania.'—J. H. Hutton, 'Races of Further Asia', *Man in India*, Vol. XII (1932), p. 10.

natural joint at the proximal end near which a circular sound-hole has been burnt. Half-way down the pole is a set of three holes and then after a space

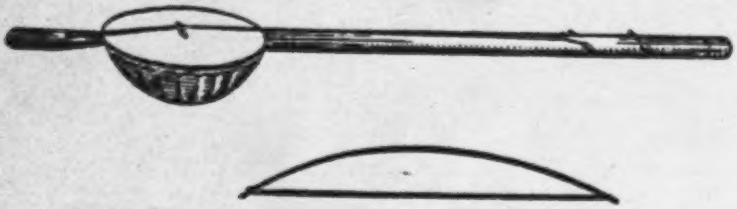

FIG. 132. *A dhusir*
(*See p. 526*)

of 4" another set of three holes. A bamboo stick with a bunch of cloth at the end is kept inside the flute to clean it. Another flute, with five stops, has a lozenge-shaped sound-hole which is divided into two by a lump of wax, so that the air can escape from both ends of the flute which has no joints to close it. A small piece of tin, held in place by a roll of salphi fibres, can be slid up and down to close one or both of the sound-holes. This flute is 14" long; a third, of the same size, has four stops and a sound-hole. This, which is only capable of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, is, of course, the most primitive. I have found it distributed in the remoter villages throughout the entire Muria area. It is curious that contact with the bazaars and main roads should even add stops to the flute, but it is so.

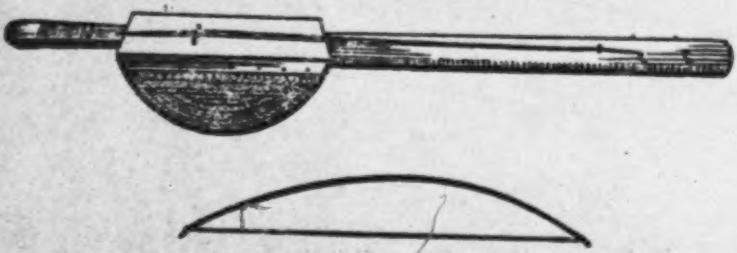

FIG. 133. Another type of *dhusir*

The chelik sometimes play their flutes very well. They dance with them at festivals, and play them while watching cattle or sitting lonely in a field-hut at night. In Bermakot, the chelik distinguished ten different tunes.—Matapar, Bangarampar, Maolipar, Budha Dokarapar, Khanda Dokarapar, Lingopar, Son Kumarpar, Kuari Maolipar, Bhamnipar and Bhagarampatpar.

14. *The kohreng.*—This is the curious musical rasp, a notched stick belonging to the idiophone class, found also in south-east Asia and Africa. The rasps are generally made of bamboo poles about 5' long with a bunch of feathers at the top. At the lower end a slot is made and notches are cut along it on either side for about 8". A bit of wood is rubbed over these notches making a rasping noise which can be adapted to the rhythm of the drums. A similar rasp made of wood, 1' long, 1½" deep and ¾" broad, was attached to the bottom of one of the elaborate toys carried on Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions.

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Here the wood was hollowed out like a little canoe and the notches were cut in its sides.

I have also an elaborate iron stridulator; it is a hollow cylindrical tube 18″ long notched right down its upper surface, and twisted at the narrower end into a crude representation of a cobra with hood erect. Attached to its lower side by an iron loop is a 4″ 'hair-pin' of twisted iron which is used to rub against the indentations of the upper surface.[1]

15. *The hach-tehendor.*—This little iron Jew's harp is said to make music so sweet 'that even a snake would dance to it', but it is not popular because it is supposed to damage the teeth. It is made by Muria-Lohar from locally smelted iron; a prong is enclosed in a small frame which is held by the teeth, the mouth thus acting as resonator, and it is played by jerking the vibrating prong (Fig. 138). There is also a very delicate instrument made of thin bamboo cut so as to leave a vibrating tongue tied by a string at the end. Held between the teeth, the string is jerked and a sweet low humming noise is produced.[2]

16. *The muyang bells.*—Small pellet-bells are tied to the buttocks by the Jhoria Muria for their festival dances. They are jerked up and down or swung to and fro. With them are usually two or three larger clapper-bells called *irna*. They are made of brass by the local Ghasia. Pellet-bells are also tied round the arms, the calves or the ankles, and strings of them are hung from the girdle.

17. *The kalwaking anklets.*—These are hollow, made of iron or brass, and contain small pellets of the same material. When the chelik dance vigorously stamping their feet, the clash of the anklets blends pleasantly with the rhythm of the drums.

18. *The chitkul cymbals.*—Nearly all Lingo's instruments are still used only by boys, but the *chitkul* are more common in the hands of girls. They are made of brass by Ghasia or Bharewa and are often attached to each other by long chains of cowries. Men and boys also use them—there is no taboo

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[1] Grigson found the Baiga of Arwar in the Balaghat District using a musical rasp, which they called *kirr-kishi*, made of a 'tapering rod of dhaman-wood carved by a series of bulges into a kind of ratchet. The key-board is a short piece of bamboo one foot long, one inch wide and a quarter of an inch thick, obtained by tangential section so that the outer surface of the bamboo is retained for roughly one-fifth of the periphery of the complete bamboo. This piece of bamboo is then bisected lengthways by a second tangential cut extending for two-thirds of its length. Five cuts in the radial direction are made to produce a double set of five "fingers", which have a common groove about 1¼″ from the open end. To operate the instrument the tapering "ratchet" stick is stabbed vertically downwards through the groove.'—W. V. Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941), p. 14. This is similar to the South Indian *kokkara*, used by Pulayar, Vedar and Kuruvar sorcerers. The *kokkara* is 'formed of a plate of iron turned into a tube, the edges strongly serrated and not closely united. From it hangs a chain and an iron pin which is rubbed along the dentate edges of the iron cylinder, making a horrid grating noise'.—S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 49. The Savara *doddowrdjan* is a stridulator made of a hollow bamboo with a slit, either side of which is rugged with small grooves, the upper part of the slit being covered with the hand to regulate the volume of resonance.—G. V. Sitapati, 'Sora Musical Instruments', *Bulletin du Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadero* (Paris, 1933), No. 3, p. 23. I have also seen Savara use as a rasp the inner ribbed core of a buffalo's horn.

[2] The jew's harp is common in Assam and Burma, where it has been recorded for the Lakher and Chin, though it is absent among the Lushai. The Naga tribes call it 'mouth music' and use it for serenades. The Mikir and Garo make a double harp and for the Kachin 'all love passages are conducted with this as the chief musical instrument'. Still more elaborate harps are found in the Sadiya District. So seductive is the music that the use of the harp is forbidden by many missionaries.—A. W. Young, 'The Jew's Harp in Assam', *JASB*, Vol. IV (N.S., 1908), pp. 235f. I have found little bamboo harps popular in the Juang and Bondo dormitories (cf. Fig. 136).

Plate CIII

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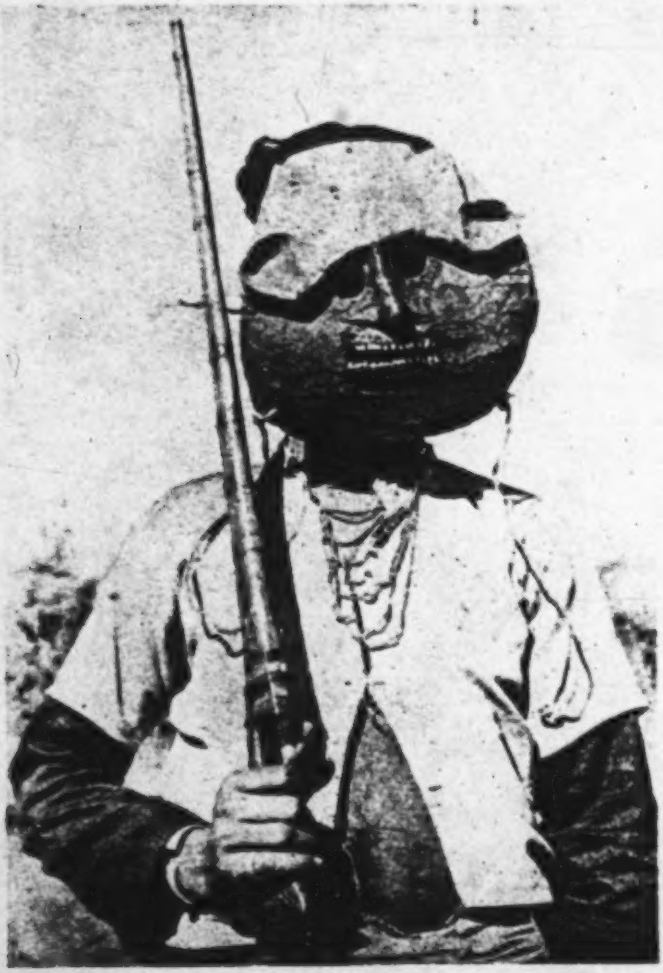

Pus Kolang mask

[p. 528(A)]

Plate CIV

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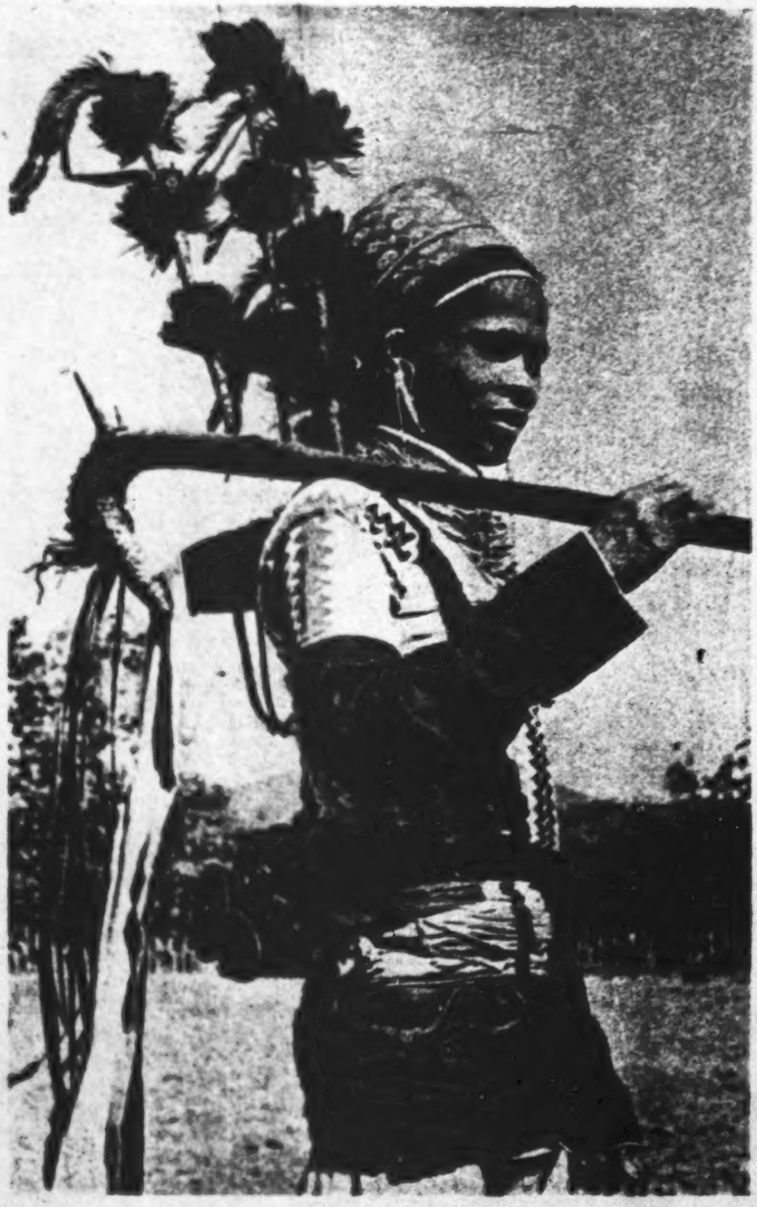

The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress

[p. 528 (B)]

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about it—but generally for fun; an old man dressed as a beggar may do a turn by himself, mournfully clashing a pair of cymbals; a couple of chelik will take them and imitate the jerky dance motions of the motiari.

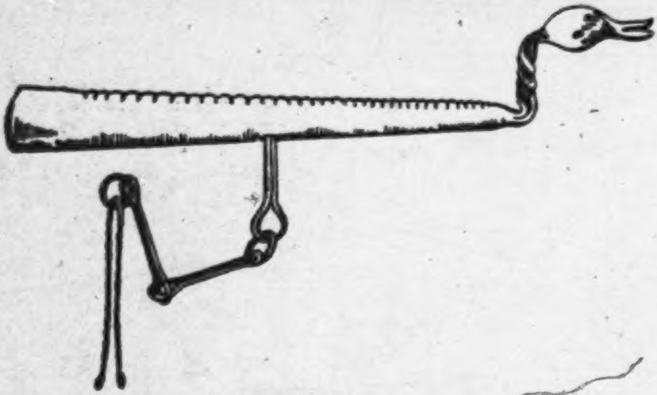

FIG. 134. An iron *kehreng*
(*See p. 527*)

These were the eighteen instruments of Lingo, and even today they are still full of the love-charms that he put into them. Not every chelik can make and use them all. Every chelik, it is safe to say, can deal with the drums; every motiari can handle the cymbals. But the buttocks-bells are not known in eastern Kondagaon, and in any ghotul there are rarely more than two or three boys who can play the stringed instruments.

Most of these instruments are not, of course, peculiar to the Muria, and it is certain that several of them do not go back to the days of Lingo. The dhol and turburi are of the ordinary Indian pattern, so are the stringed instruments. But the hunting horn, the four-holed flute, the musical rasp, the bamboo Jew's harp, the canoe-shaped gong are very primitive.

Beside the eighteen instruments, the Muria have a few others. They sometimes use a tambourine called *dahi*, made of goatskin stretched over a wooden ring, 15" in diameter. This instrument is common throughout Orissa: it is the chang of the Juang. The Jhoria of the western parganas make bull-roarers for amusement. I have not been able to discover any religious or magical significance in them; they are only used as toys. The Muria make their bull-roarers of bamboo slats, 12" to 18" long and ¾" to 1" broad; they are notched round one end and a string is attached; sometimes they are pointed at the other end. The blade is then whirled round in the air and a roaring noise is made, as a result of the edge and flat surface being alternately presented to the air and thus acting as a closing and opening valve.[1] The *mora*, which is the *shanai*-clarionet of other parts of India, is sometimes used at marriages.

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[1] The bull-roarer is widely distributed throughout the world, but can hardly be called common in India. It is used in the Uraon *dhumkuria*, and Roy discovered it among the Santal, Ho and Munda. Munda and Uraon bull-roarers have been found perforated as well as notched, but elsewhere, as in Bastar, only the notched type has been recorded. See S. C. Roy, 'The Bull-Roarer in India', *Man in India*, Vol. VII (1927), pp. 6ff.

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A very simple drum is made by Muria living in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. Two slats are made on the upper rounded surface of a split bamboo about 3′ long and these are raised by small wooden frets placed at either end. These are beaten with two small wooden sticks, the operator sitting cross-legged on the ground.[1] (See Figs. 53 and 139.)

III. The Mandri Drum

So important is the mandri drum to the chelik and so essential to their chief dances that I devote a special section to its manufacture and use.

The drum exists in two forms, the first akin to the *mridang* pattern universal throughout India, the second of the *damaru* hour-glass type. The *khut māndri* is a double-membrane drum, 30″ long, of wood or earthenware, the two ends being of different sizes, one 10″ in diameter and the other 7″. The membranes are made of cow-hide attached by strips of the same material criss-crossed round the body of the drum. The *hulki māndri*, which is also called *ojha parra* or *damaru*, is a waisted drum, shaped and hollowed out of a single piece of wood. At either end it is covered with lizard-skin which is fixed in place by a ring of bamboo held by cords made of siari bark. A normal size for this drum is 11″ long and 6½″ diameter at either end.

It is said by the Muria that only a great lover, a man who desires to shine before the maidens of the village, will go to the trouble nowadays of making a wooden mandri. Earthen drums or earthen bowls from which drums can be manufactured are easily obtainable in the bazaars and there is a growing tendency to use them. Those who make the mandri of wood do so, therefore, with great care and elaborate ceremonial.

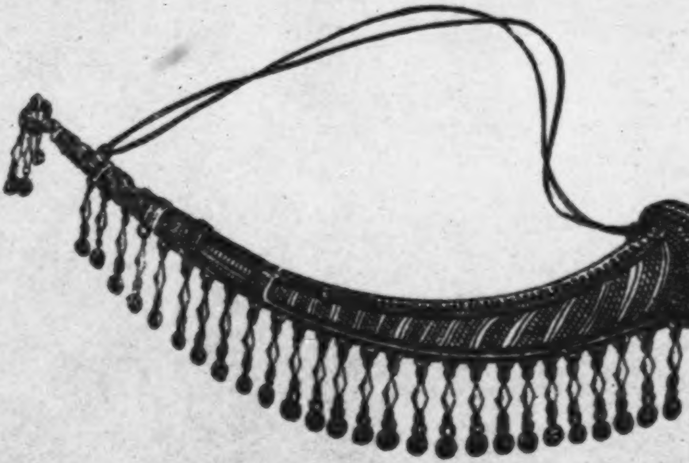

Fig. 135. Hunting-horn of brass
(*See p. [illegible]*)

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[1] This resembles the *tawng* of the Shan States. But the Shan instrument has a sort of sounding board made by a hole in the bamboo. The Reddis have a similar split stringed instrument—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348—so have the Bondo (Fig. 53), and the Savara.

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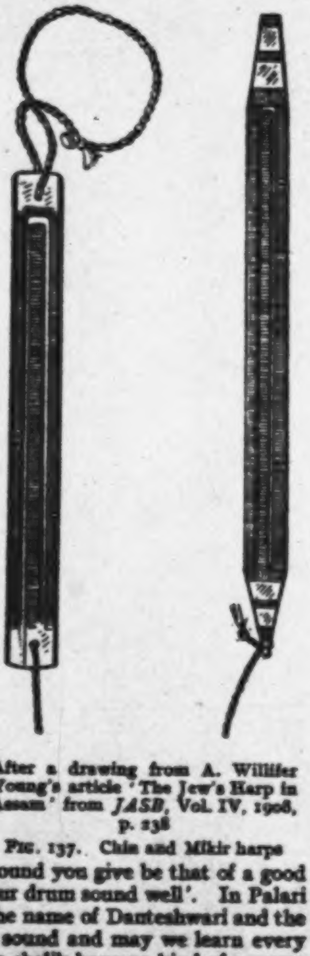
In the month of June, when the first rain falls and the frogs begin to croak, a boy goes to the jungle to find a suitable tree. The tree may either be bija, sirsa, mahua, mango or dumar fig. Probably the most commonly used is the bija. Before cutting the tree the chelik must offer it an egg with some siari gum as incense on a little fire saying, 'Look, we are taking you to make you into a drum; may the sound you give be that of a good drum'. Another prayer is, 'Look Bhimul, let our drum sound well'. In Palari the boys used to offer *supāri* and coconut in the name of Danteshwari and the Departed saying, 'May our drum give a good sound and may we learn every kind of step (*dāka*) and rhythm (*pār*); may the chelik have no kind of sorrow; may the songs of the chelik and motiari be good'. The reference to Bhimul, which is repeated at the worship of the drums before the marriage ceremony, is probably due to his association with rain and thunder. In some legends thunder is caused by the noise made by Bhimul dragging his water-skin across the sky. He who gives thunder in heaven is the best person to promote the thunder of the drum on earth.

FIG. 136. Bamboo Jew's harp
Length 4½"



After a drawing from A. Willifer Young's article 'The Jew's Harp in Assam' from *JASB*, Vol. IV, 1908, p. 238

FIG. 137. Chin and Mikir harps

Then the boy cuts down the tree and takes it home. He hollows out the wood with his *bewas* (Fig. 14) and axe until it is of perfect shape. He makes a little hole in one side and closes it with a wooden plug. This is called the drum's umbilical stump. Later when the drum is ready the boy will blow into it, the idea being that when there is more air inside, it will sound better. Then he puts it aside for a year. During this year he should offer Bhimul a pig for the success of his drum. Then in the same month that he originally cut the wood, when the frogs are croaking again, he ties the skin to either end.

The preparation of the skin also has its appropriate ritual. The boy takes the cow-hide to the river and puts it in the water to soak. When he finds after three or four days that the hairs come out easily, he removes it and offers red and black powder, seven rings of aonra leaf, egg-shells, a chicken and liquor to the Yer Kanyang saying, 'O Kanyang, for so many days you have been defiled; to free you of this I make these offerings; let the skin be good and let it not break'. The idea that the water is defiled by contact with cow-hide is, of course, an accretion on older Muria thought. It is quite inconsistent, for the same Muria do not hesitate to eat beef and to offer cows and bulls to their gods. It is said that once a Siraha, when consulted as to why the skins of the drum broke rather quickly, declared that it was because the Water Maiden was angry at her defilement by contact with leather, and the custom arose from this.

The skin is tied to the drum in the months when the frogs begin to croak so that as the frogs croak loudly the drum too will give a loud noise'.

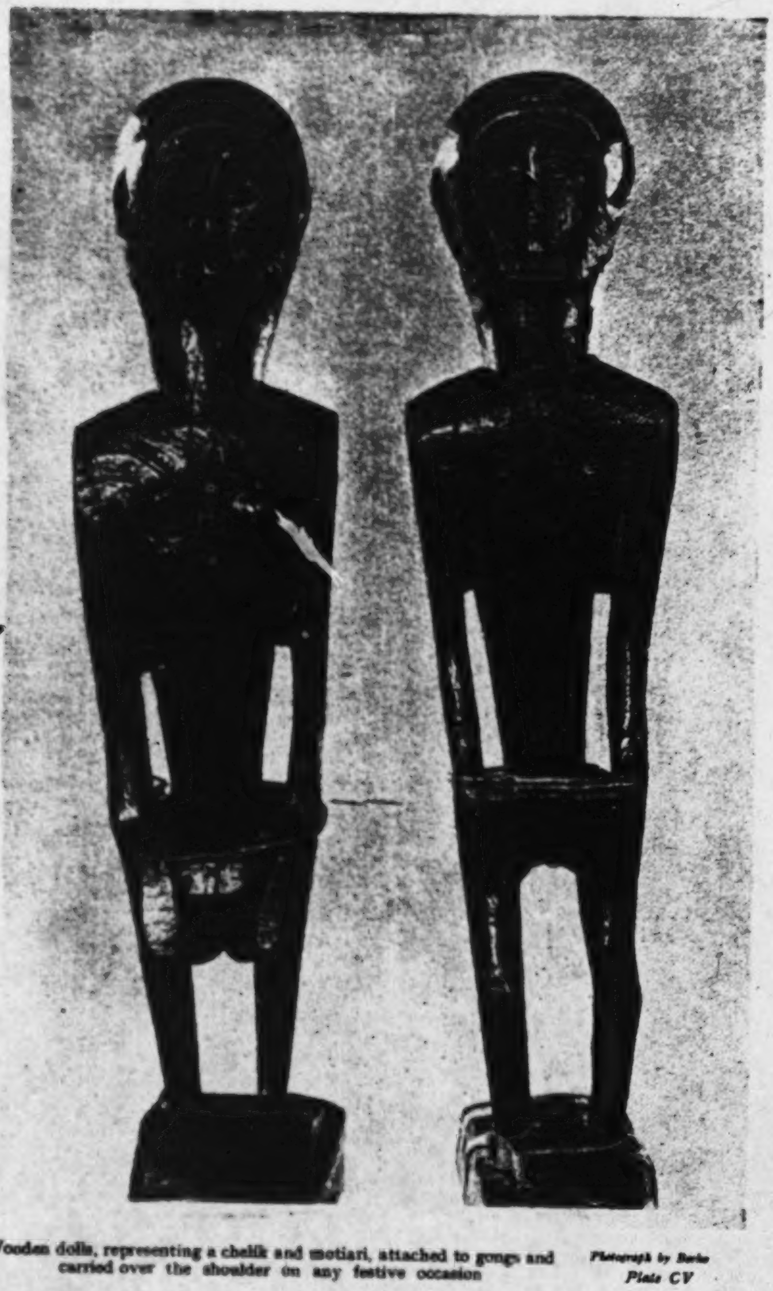
Then the boy with the help of his friends makes a little platform of sticks on the ground, lays the skin upon it, stands on either end to keep it taut, scatters ash over it and with a bit of wood rubs off the hairs. He doubles the skin, lays the drum mouth-downwards on it and cuts round leaving an ample margin. When it has dried he cuts the upper skin to the exact size required, leaving the underskin to project all round. He makes long strips of cord from the hide, cutting it out circlewise. Then he ties the skins to either end, fixing them in place with the cords that he criss-crosses over the body.

It is said that cow-hide is better than bullock's, but that the skin of cow or bullock killed by a tiger gives the best sound of all. This is obviously based on the idea that the drum thunders as the tiger roars.

Now as the chelik is finishing his work he soaks a few mahua flowers in water and offers them to the drum with a little rice, pulse, haldi, an egg, and a chicken saying, 'Look, Bhimul Mandri Guru, O all ye Departed, I am offering you this so that my drum may sound well every day'. In the villages of the north, where the cult of Lingo is prominent, the offerings are made in his name. This is more appropriate, since Lingo was the first musician who taught the Muria the art of drumming.

Then the boy puts some oil and flour mixed together on both ends of the drum; he sometimes attaches a sort of saddle of polished cow-hide to protect his body. I have also seen ordinary blankets, deer-skin or leopard-skin used for this purpose. At last when everything is ready, on that very night the boy summons the chelik and motiari and dances with them the whole night beating the drum all the time. The drum thus introduced to the community of youth may last a lifetime.

The drums are hung in the verandah or sitting-room of a house or suspended from the roof of the ghotul. In some ghotul the entire ceiling is covered with drums, a very impressive sight. The instruments are treated with reverence and are honoured on special occasions. The mandri is used mainly for marriages; for religious festivals a circular dhol drum is employed. When the boys go for a marriage, as they enter the village they exclaim, 'May no hostile god or goddess, witch or warlock trouble us'. They pluck a little dub grass and



Wooden dolls, representing a chelik and motiari, attached to gongs and carried over the shoulder on any festive occasion

Photograph by Berko
Plate CV

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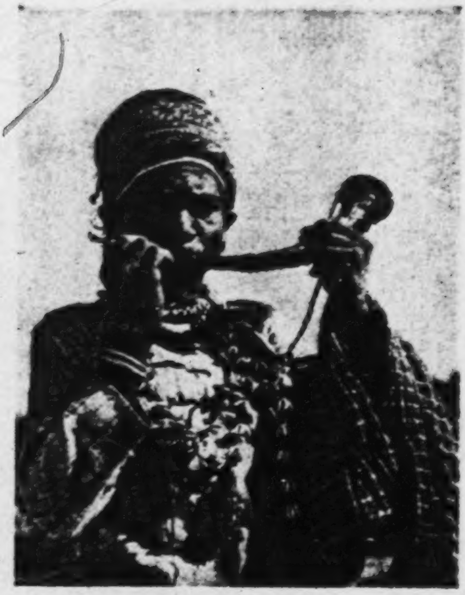

Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

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Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532(a)]

x883 534 throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

[524] 'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.'[1]

IV. Dancing Dress

x883 292 Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

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[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 430ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

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The basis of this dress is a very commonplace shirt and a white skirt with red bands, held in place by a wide sash, all of bazaar cloth. The chelik wear on their heads either turbans tied straight round to make a sort of box or a round cap of bamboo lattice-work covered with red cloth with one end hanging down behind as a streamer. This *topi*, as it is called, is decorated with feathers, cowries, coloured balls borrowed from the motiari and anything else available. When a turban is worn, it is similarly decorated and has one or two long streamers, or strings of cowries hanging down behind.

Round their waists the chelik tie a cord and attach to it bunches of small and big bells which hang above their buttocks.[1] I once saw a boy with a large wooden cow-bell. From the shoulders hangs the very distinctive dancing-shield called *moghi*. This is a circular shield of carved wood or basketwork, with bamboo hoops underneath to support it away from the back and often four smaller hoops of bamboo or brass on the upper side, through which are threaded more streamers of red, white or blue cloth (see Fig. 33).

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Sometimes coloured shawls are thrown over the shoulders spoiling the effect, since they conceal the shields. I have only once seen the older type of Hill Maria 'rib-waistcoat', and that was at Bandopal where the boys covered their waistcoats with folded strips of white cloth so arranged as to look like a series of ribs down the body. Round their necks the boys wear masses of ornaments, many of them borrowed for the occasion from their sisters and cousins.

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Every dancer must carry something over his shoulder. Nowadays this is often an umbrella, though an umbrella decorated with strings of cowries or even bunches of fruit. Traditionally the Hill Maria carried a large pharsa battle-axe over his shoulder: the Muria still sometimes make exaggeratedly large wooden pharsa, carved wooden godel axes, sticks with bunches of peacock feathers tied to the top; the less enterprising carry ordinary pharsa and godel axes and even wooden sticks.

The most interesting objects carried by the Muria for their festival dances are the 'horses', or *hokti* as they are called (Figs. 27, 29). These are roots of trees chosen because their shape roughly resembles the head of a horse, often a fringe of smaller roots being left on the upper side to indicate the mane. This 'horse' is given horns or ears by fixing pointed bits of wood, barking-deer horns, or the tusks of the wild boar to the front of the 'head'. From its nose hang long streamers of white feathers, and the nose itself is often decorated with crisscross patterns. Into the back of the *hokti* are fixed three or four ornamented sticks each with a tuft of feathers at the end. The general effect, specially when a very large number of these 'horses' appear together, is magnificent.

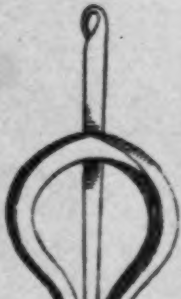

FIG. 138. Iron Jew's harp
Length 3½"

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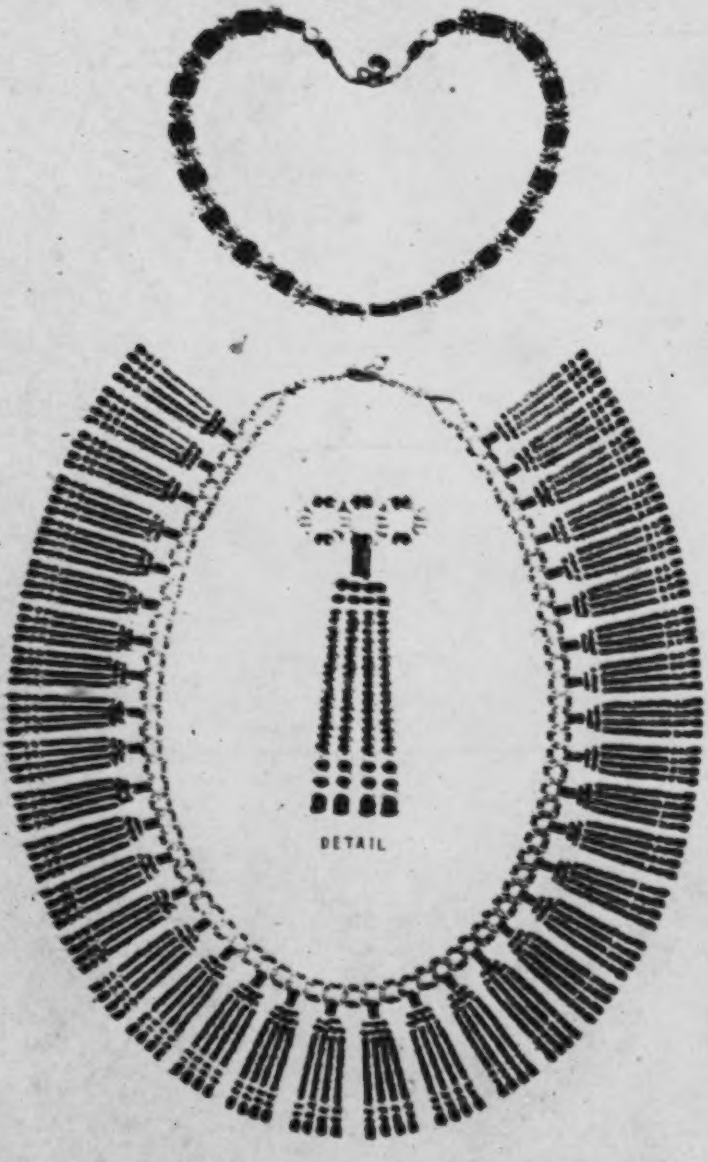
[1] These buttocks-bells, which are characteristic of the Hill Maria, have also been recorded in the Coorg area of the Western Ghats. See M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132.



JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM KEHAWAND

[facing p. 534]

DANCE AND SONG

V. The Mandri Dance

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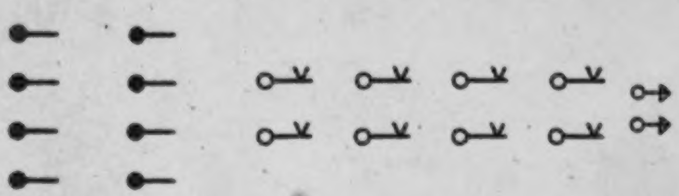
I include here all those dances which are primarily exhibitions of drumming with the earthen or wooden mandri, the large waisted parrai, and the wooden tudra. These dances are performed at marriages or for amusement in the ghotul; they are the dances normally displayed at the camps of touring officials and visitors.

There is no special uniform; the dancers wear what they can. Boys sometimes carry carved wooden axes over one shoulder: girls and boys may decorate their faces with white spots, lines and stars. There is often a boy in peacock-dress or a cowrie-jacket. All the pomp and excitement of the dance is for the boys; the peahens to these exuberant peacocks are usually pushed into a corner where they sing a subdued little Relo on their own.

There are a great many different movements in the Mandri; I will describe them one by one. The prelude, or grand entrance, is done at the beginning of the dance always, when the boys bring in the wood for the marriage-booth, when they go to welcome the bridegroom on his arrival at their village, and when they escort bride or bridegroom to the Lagir ceremony. The formation is simple—boys form a double file followed by two rows of girls.



The procession advances a few steps, halts, retires a little, advances again. Sometimes it comes forward with a rush, halts, turns round and rushes back not quite so far, comes on again; with each rush the procession makes a slight advance. I saw this done very effectively at Sidhawand, where the boys held antlers in their hands. When they reached the limit of their advance they bowed with them to the ground, then all together raised them into the air with a fine flourish, and retired. At Kokori, boys entered in a long serpentine column. Every four paces, they knelt down, then advanced crab-like sideways, knelt, went back, came on again, knelt, moved to and fro on their knees. Sometimes the line of drummers squats down and hops along, drumming vigorously the while. When the drummers have made their entry, they should perform the drum worship in the name of Bhimul or Lingo.

They then usually form themselves into the first movement, which is quite simple. They go round in a circle, with a straightforward rapid walk, the

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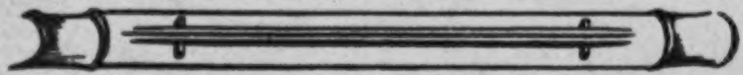

Fig. 139. A bamboo drum (*see p. 530*)

knees slightly bent. If there are any boys with wooden kutorka or tudra, these gyrate inside the main circle. The girls form two lines some distance

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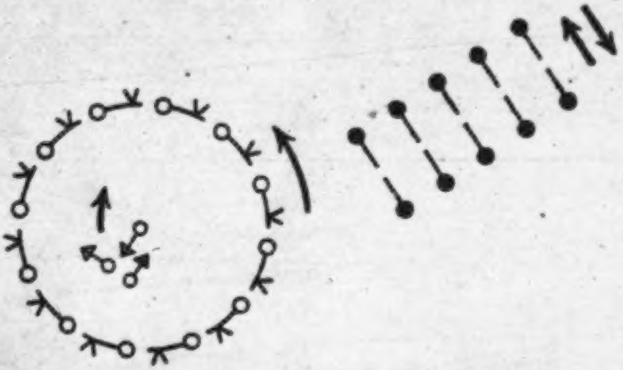
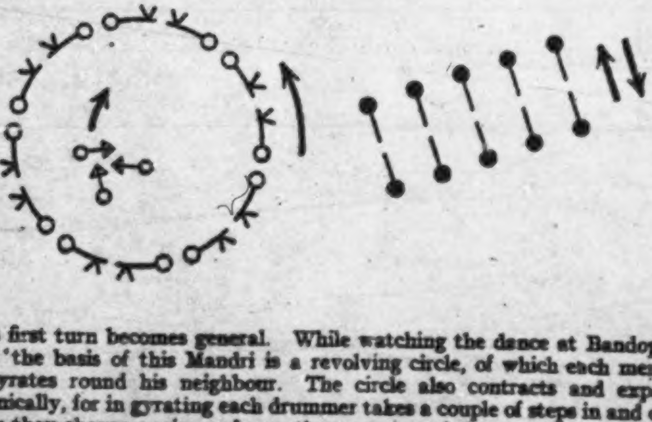
away, and sing a Relo song which has no relation in time or rhythm to the drumming or the movements of the boys. Since the girls' dances are quite independent, I will describe them all together later.



There is no particular order about the subsequent movements and formations of the Mandri dance. After a time the circle of drummers, on an order from the leader, either turns round and goes in the opposite direction, or goes backwards.

At another order from the leader, every other drummer turns round, so that now they rotate in pairs. Sometimes each lays his left hand on his partner's drum: this is the *Samdhi Johar*.

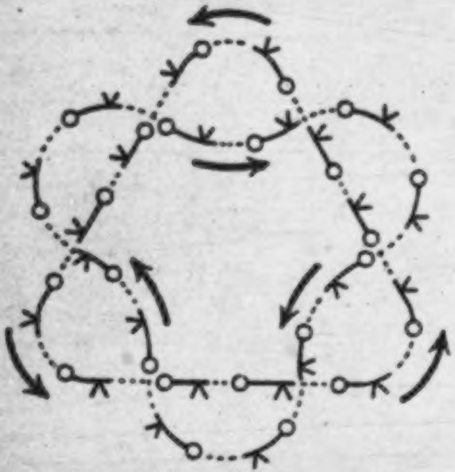


This first turn becomes general. While watching the dance at Bandopal I wrote, 'the basis of this Mandri is a revolving circle, of which each member also gyrates round his neighbour. The circle also contracts and expands rhythmically, for in gyrating each drummer takes a couple of steps in and out'.

Then they change again, and now there are two circles gyrating in opposite directions, threading through each other—this is called the *semilaha* (see p. 537).

The drummers beat with an upward flourish of the hands; each swirls round, bending his knees a little; each member wheels as the whole circle wheels.

But there is no limit to the variations of the Mandri. At one moment the dancers are going round in a circle, and each boy has one hand on the shoulder of the drummer in front of him; the next they have closed in and are kneeling down facing inwards clapping their hands; soon they jump up, turn round, open the circle and kneel again facing outwards, clapping their hands. They put their hands on their hips and sway twice on their feet. Sometimes they gyrate with the drums between their legs, beating with the left hand behind the left leg, then they swing the drums up and forward. Between beats, they touch first chest, then buttocks with their hands, then beat the drums.



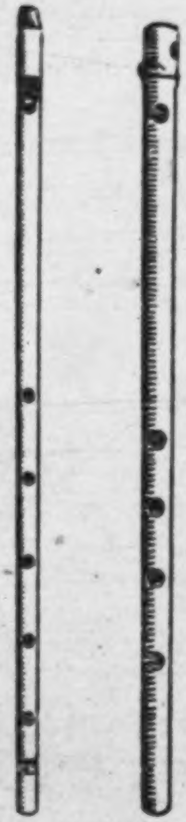


FIG. 140. Flutes
(*See p. 526*)

Sometimes they do a sort of leap-frog: the circle shakes out a little, and they kneel down with the drums on the ground and each in turn jumps over the others. When that is done they begin to gyrate, kneeling down, and hopping forward.

In another movement, the boys kneel in a circle facing one way; they shuffle round on their knees, upright, they lean back on their heels, one foot to one side, then to the other. They go round slowly on their knees, like a fantastic ring of cripples, then lean right back and go backwards supporting their bodies with one hand, drumming with the other. Then they go forward on all fours beating with alternate hands and at last spring up and go round quickly.

When they tire of this, they sit on the drums lengthways as though riding a horse; then they turn inwards and move towards the centre pulling the drums in with graceful movements, and later widen the circle again with the same movements reversed. They abandon their drums and dance round the circle, clapping their hands, sometimes sitting down on each other's drums to

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beat them for a few moments, up again and round, leaping, gesticulating, whirling round.

The best Mandri dancing I have seen was at Khutgaon under the inspiration of the remarkable old Muria landlord Kodu. A band of twenty-five black-coated boys headed by Kodu entered the ghotul. Several had silver belts tied across their shoulders from right to left, or chains of little bells hanging down behind; they wore silk turbans, cheap ornaments and used small parrang drums. Here, I thought, were typical decayed Muria of the lowlands. But there was nothing decayed about their dancing. They entered, and stood still without a sound. Kodu raised his hand in a fine gesture and a shout, and they all did the same. They gesticulated with both hands, and away they went in a swiftly moving circle. After a time the boys rushed outwards; they clapped their hands twice, turned, drummed on the turn, stopped, pointed, gesticulated, drummed again, clapped their hands twice, bent down, exclaimed loudly, stamped, went round again, clapped their hands twice, beat the drums twice, went round and round. Then more pointing in the air and shouting, a jump in the air, two claps of the hands, two beats of the drum, then round again, now facing out, now in, clap and drum again.

Now the dance changed. As they went round, the drummers hopped three paces on the left foot, turned inwards, stood still. There was a pause of silence, then all gesticulated and shouted together, faced about, shouted, turned to the right and circulated drumming with very wide movements of the hands, more and more quickly, left foot forward, right up to it with a little kick, right forward, left up to it with a kick. Then they stopped and moved backwards, round and round, drumming incessantly with great vigour. At last they stopped, facing out from their circle, pointed to the sky, gave a great shout, and broke their ranks. It was a most invigorating dance to watch.

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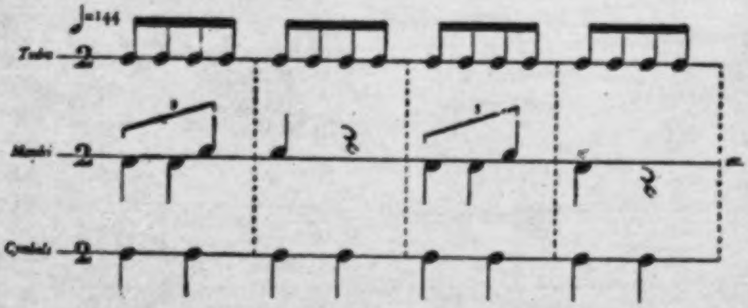
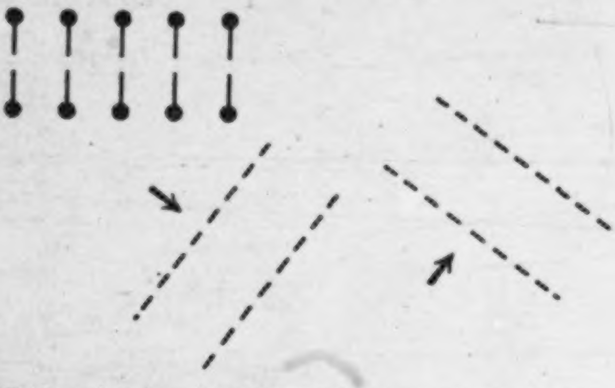


Drum rhythm

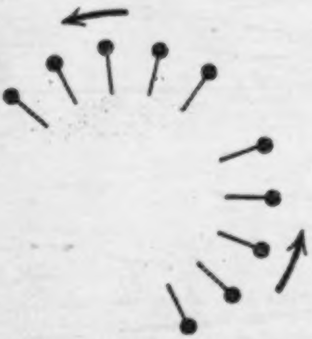
During this magnificent parade, the motiari too were dancing, but in a corner, shy and subdued, their heads bowed and bodies bent to hide their charms. No one took any notice of them; all eyes were on the boys. Yet the girls' dances are interesting, and can be delightful. The motiari form two lines facing inwards, and generally begin by standing erect and singing antiphonally while they clash their cymbals or clap their hands. They do not hold each other. Presently one line bends forward while the other remains upright, and those bending forward clap their hands or cymbals low down between their legs.

The two lines now gradually work round; ideally they should pivot round on their centre, preserving the double-line formation—



Actually they often form into a half circle in two sections as below.

An alternative movement is this—the girls form two lines, but when it comes to the moment when one of them is to bend forward, the line turns round and then bends down. The Jamkot Para motiari did this very well; every four beats of the cymbals they swing round and change position. Sometimes both lines have their backs to each other. Here they do the swing-dance in line; in Kachora I saw it done excellently in a circle. The motiari there first went round clockwise with their cymbals in a full circle; then every girl began to turn right every three steps and bent down, gave three beats with the cymbals, stood upright, took three steps round, turned left, bent down and so on. In this way, the circle alternately faced inwards and outwards. Done with real vigour this is an exciting dance to watch. At Bhanpuri, each girl put her left leg between the legs of her left-hand neighbour, thus moving slowly round.



In the Kondagaon area, the motiari sometimes accompany the boys' Mandri dance in one long line, each arm in arm with her neighbour, clashing their cymbals and either bending forward or swaying to and fro.

In Chandabera the Karse Pata was a quick round: the girls clasped each other by the waist and went left right, right foot always behind the other, with rapid vigorous and distinctive singing. But in another form of the Karse Pata, two lines face each other and the motiari clasp each other's hands. Each line in turn bends down and the girls swing their clasped hands to and fro while they sing. In this they do not move round but remain stationary.

Most of the marriage songs have to be sung by a line or half-circle of motiari. While they are tying the plaits of bride and bridegroom, or applying haldi, or offering tika, or bathing or decorating the happy pair, the girls obviously

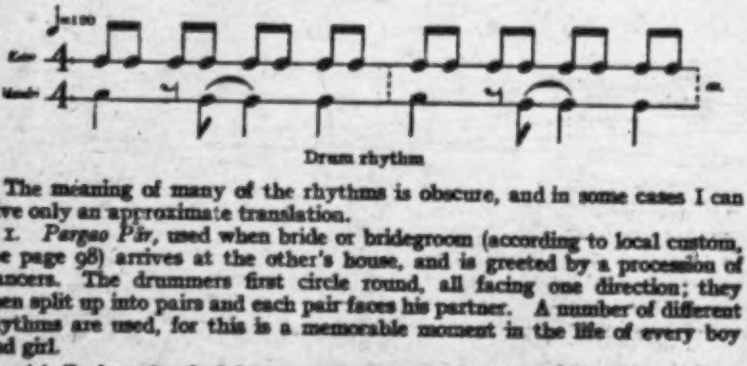
X883 535 cannot move about. They have, however, devised a most effective form of stationary dance which obtains its effect from the movements of the hands and the swaying, bending and jerking of the body. This is probably why the girls' dances are not synchronized to the boys' drumming. The girls have their special duties and must adapt their songs to these, but the boys can move about independently for a large part of the time.

VI. The Drum Rhythms

X883 535 533 585 In villages in the central area particularly, the Muria distinguish a great many *pâr* or rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with the *dâka* steps, though they are sometimes associated with special movements of the dance. Thus, there are *pâr*-rhythms for the Pargao in a marriage, for the dances round the booth, for the great crisis of the Lagir, and to lead bride and bridegroom to the marriage-bed. Different rhythms accompany the worship of Mother Earth.

The *pâr* are known by easily memorized sentences, the words of which have usually no connexion with the dance but describe it by their rhythm. The Jhoria Muria do not seem to know many of these. At Metawand, the chelik only knew of two—'When we beat the drum with both hands', said one of them, 'the drum says *nikun gatha nikun gatha*, copulate properly, and when it is beaten with one hand, it says *deos deos endât*, dance jumping'.

It is in villages like Kabonga, Bargaon and Hathipakhna and in most of the ghotul of the east-central area that the practice of the *pâr* has been most fully elaborated. At Hathipakhna there was a blind Mandar Guru, an old man who taught the boys their rhythms. He had only to say the words and the chelik immediately followed on their drums.



Drum rhythm

The meaning of many of the rhythms is obscure, and in some cases I can give only an approximate translation.

1. *Pargao Pâr*, used when bride or bridegroom (according to local custom, see page 98) arrives at the other's house, and is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction; they then split up into pairs and each pair faces his partner. A number of different rhythms are used, for this is a memorable moment in the life of every boy and girl.

(*a*) *Barha mâna ke lukhâwun khâwuâs tuy to âs tuy to âs saga ke kahân le purâwuâs?*
You are eating the stolen pork. How will you give it to the saga?

(*b*) *Jim jim jim nadum marha, jim jim jim nadum marha.*
Rain is falling in the dead of night.

(*c*) *Hât jâsis duriya duriya, pej khâwun jâne.*
You are going to a market far far away. Eat your gruel and go.

(*d*) *Kahân le yillâsil duriya lâphi duriyâle.*
You have come from far away.

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Plate CVII

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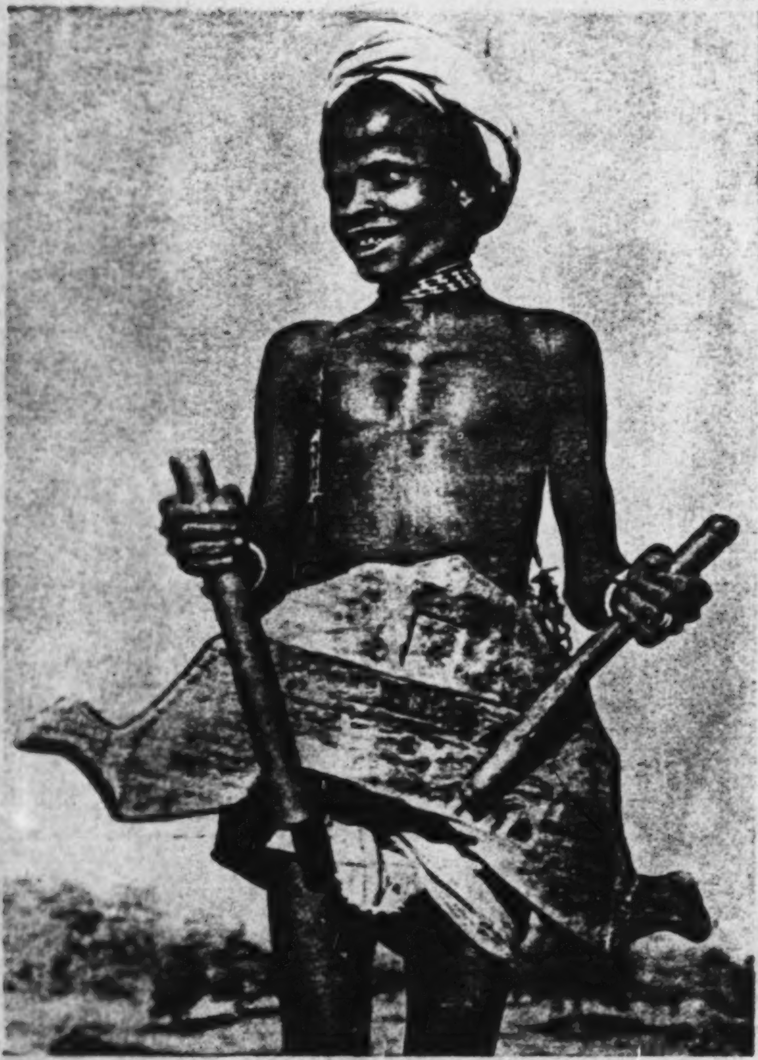

Kachora chelik with tudra drum

[p. 540 (A)]

Plate CVIII

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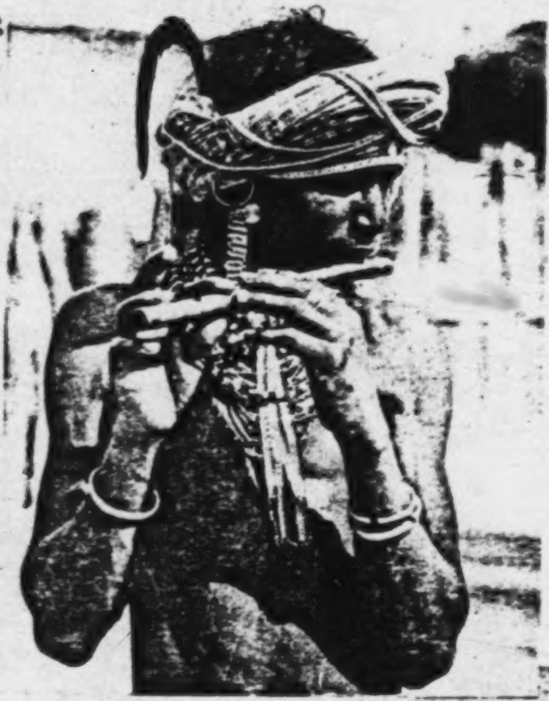
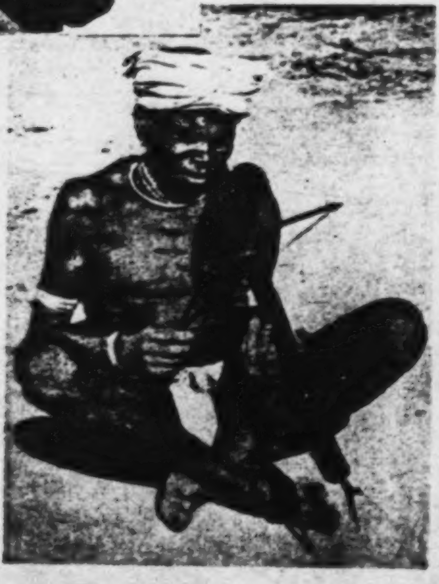


Chelik playing the flute at Nayanar



Ghotul Kotwar of Markabera playing the dhusir

[p.540 (B)]

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(e) *Are buba kashār be.*
O father, it will bite.

(f) *Dur dur dur dur neyi kashār be.*
Drive it off; the dog may bite.

2. *Saga Pār*, used when the two fathers-in-law meet officially for the first time. The chelik dance round them in a circle, facing each other in pairs: every now and then they halt and each pair raise their hands off their drums and salute each other, crying on a long steady note *Johār ho saga*.

(a) *Johār ho saga johār.*
Johar, saga, Johar.

(b) *Tuy samdhi mai samdhi surti minjun kānwula.*
You are samdhi, I am samdhi, let us eat the powdered tobacco.

(c) *Aking koya korha dārango tuska ta.*
Pluck the leaf, O hoe, to serve the liquor.

(d) *Tehāt layor māndi tun.*
Boys, lift up your knees.

(e) *Gatla pāta sakle kim dāy pohre mām.*
Put on your clothes properly before you go away.

(f) *Johār ho saga johār bhet howun duno saga samdhi mand piyun.*
Johar, saga, johar, we've met so let us drink.

(g) *Adi narka bhum narka tara peha kal norka.*
Bring water to wash the feet at midnight and midday, O boy!

3. *Dārango Undāna Pār*, the rhythm for drinking liquor, This also accompanies the ritual drinking of liquor by the two fathers-in-law.

Dumun dumun kāha ta, dumun dumun kāha ta.
Take out liquor from the pot and drink.

4. *Manda Pār.* These are the rhythms used while the boys bring in the wood for the marriage booth—the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession; when the platform is plastered inside; and when any of the many minor rites are being performed under its shade.

(a) *Usta gundur gundur ta tin pekor wark wark!*
O the quail! Eat parched rice, O boys!

(b) *Bonyla banāwan jhathe māti ān gaitin.*
Let us make a platform; O Gaitin, quickly bring the earth.

(c) *Harde reka paita pekin penda uita.*
The char flower has blossomed on the way; the girl's vagina has swollen.

(d) *Chich penda kawrela.*
The vagina is a cowrie facing upwards.

(e) *And and and, āyo āyo āyo!*
That's it! That's it! No it isn't! No it isn't!

(f) *Gaon cho manuk siyān.*
All the headmen of the village.

(g) *Nawan nawan chepāwan.*
Take her, press her.

(h) *Ad leya besta handik surti desta.*
That girl is beautiful, give her some tobacco.

x 883 (i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pokre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

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5. *Neyi Tarkāna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Tada mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chehli basunde ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha māna ke chorun neyse lāchhu āy lāchhu mai ki dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polka dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamka āse, chu hābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu hābri chu.*

(f) *Tada bhuski hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon hāje pursa.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

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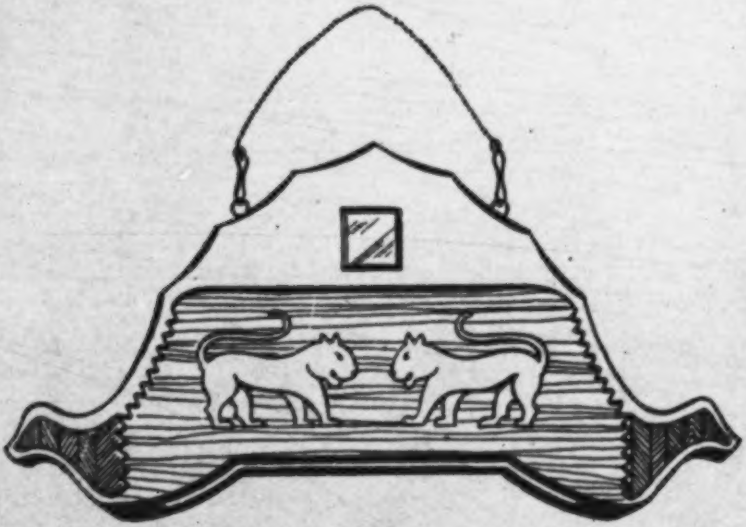

FIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Maur Talāna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de hanwār bābu hanwār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

7. *Lagir Pār.* The climax of the marriage is when the bride and bridegroom are escorted round the booth seven times in a procession of chelik with their drums and by loudly singing motiari. 883x 533 535 585

(*a*) *Mai samdhi tuy samdhin johār bhat howun leha he pāni rihāwun.*
We samdhi do Johar, pour the water over the boy.

(*b*) *Baniagāon cho ban bhainsa bāte chāra charess gucha bai hedendata hedendata.*
The wild buffalo of Baniagaon is grazing on the way. Move aside, girl, and I will drive it off.

(*c*) *Yerganda inta tāne tinta, hamka inta, tāne tinta.*
Say it is a water-snake and eat it. Say it is turmeric and eat it.

(*d*) *Korwāl kusir korasta agay mute narasta.*
The *korwāl* vegetable has sprouted; the girl went every day to see it.

(*e*) *Bāte ralo durki chu chu chu ta ta ta.*
The panther is on the road. *Chu chu ta ta ta.*

(*f*) *Johār leyor johār kor phat phate manta.*
O boys Johar! It is cock-crow time.

(*g*) *Tada buda hātum ta.*
Stand up, old man, and go to market.

8. *Kor Pude Pār.* Bride and bridegroom are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed; they must be escorted thither with the roar of drums. In these *pār* the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks—an obvious reference to the cock they are going to steal.

(*a*) *Adan luta dam-dama tarni bāyle gum guma.*
The charred saja wood is strong, the young girl is hard and firm.

(*b*) *Dulhi dudh ke dulha dhare dulhi thar thare.*
The bridegroom holds the breasts of the bride and the bride trembles.

(*c*) *Dhirey dhirey dhirey gumcha, chānd chānd chānd gumcha.*
Penetrate slowly! Penetrate quickly!

(*d*) *Dongur mund cho kawu, bhitre newun gab gab dewu.*
The root in the ant-hill; take it inside and press it hard.[1]

This is the end of the rhythms used in marriages. The following *pār* can also, of course, be used in marriages, but they are not connected with specific moments of the ceremony. They represent the purely recreational side of the dancing. 883x 533 535

9. *Gondin Pār.* The drummers circle in a line of couples facing each other.

Gondin gondin bolsat kāy ke gondin bolsat? Buchah mand dese tabto gondin haldse.
To whom will you say Gondin, Gondin? If she will give a little liquor then you can call her Gondin.

10. *Māndar Pēni Pār.* The drummers first stand still facing each other in pairs. Suddenly they flourish their hands in the air and move quickly round with short steps, knees bent. Then they straighten their knees and dance to left and right on alternate feet.

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[1] It is said that the chelik sometimes use these rhythms as a sort of secret language to make proposals to the motiari. Even when no words are spoken they are understood: even the tapping of the rhythm with the fingers is enough.

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Karanji gaon cho bhursa aur bodi nāo pārun pārun sāng. Gotok bāhri cho gotok silik.
Speak of Bhusa and Bodi of Karanji. For one broom there's one bamboo pin.

11. *Sailori Pār.* The rhythm is very distinctive. The drumming is punctuated by shrill cries and the boys wave their arms in the air between the beats. Their circle moves constantly backwards and forwards.

(*a*) *Nāchun nāchun kahān jānwān? Hamke lāgli bhuk donāyek pej kon dewu āy?*
Where should we go dancing dancing? We are hungry, who will give us gruel?

(*b*) *Kedun kedun bāgdare yeklo manuk yend kare chichka chargod ke ār kare.*
The tiger makes the man run away; what can the fellow's testes do? He can only hide in a fish-net.

(*c*) *Chachān mārun neyse chachān mārun neyse jānw bohāri chandāwān.*
The hawk has carried it away; let us go, *bohāri*, to release it.

(*d*) *Chāh chāh pār oltom.*
The drum-beating is very careless.

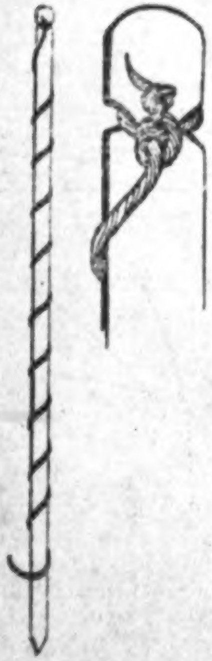

FIG. 142. Bull-roarer from Markabera
Length 1' 9"

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12. *Kondagaon Pār.* A rhythm specially associated with the Kondagaon ghotul.

Dum dām Kondāgaon nāogaon Sonābāl.
Beating at Kondagaon and judgement at Sonabal.

13. *Māndri Pār* or *Māndar Kelni Pār.* One of the drummers kneels down and the others go round him in line and then one by one jump over him. The last boy of the line also kneels and they then jump over two drummers, and so on till all save one are kneeling. He jumps over the whole line, kneels at the head of it, and leads them round, still kneeling and drumming in a circle, moving forward first on one knee and then on the other.

Māndar dandik kelun ta.
Play the drum for a little while.
Pāgi hitāwun desta.
Remove the cloth from the vagina.

14. *Uram Pār.* This complicated 'Pleasure Dance' is delightful to watch. The boys first move in a circle, beating their drums with both hands at the same end. Then they put them down on the ground, large end facing outwards, and go round beating each of the drums in turn until they return to their own. They sit down on the drums and beat each end in turn with both hands. Then they beat the outer ends, stand up and clap their hands in the air, swing round, bend down and beat the inner end, then roll the drums round in a circle, lift them two paces, put them down again, beat alternately inner and outer ends, roll them round again, beat outer ends, stand again clapping

their hands above the head, stoop down, swing the drums up over the shoulder and continue the dance in the usual way. 883x 533 535

Basu ndur gāwun duno bāt cho.
Let both parties sit and sing.

15. *Wark Pār.* When the boys and girls eat parched rice on some ceremonial occasion in the ghotul, they dance to this rhythm.

Udi saga udita porbodela dāt sangi dāt sangi mamāt jāle wāyom.
Sit, saga, to play the Porbodela game.

16. *Māti Pār.* The only rhythm for a religious occasion. This is sometimes used when offerings are made to Mother Earth.

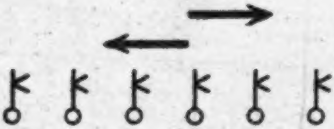
Buta bhitar cho lamha māns chāh chāh ne.
They left the hare's flesh carelessly below the shrub.

VII. Religious Dances

Muria chelik and motiari dance at the great clan festivals, at the ordinary village ceremonies, and during the Pus Kolang and other expeditions; they dance, in fact, in honour of the clan-god, the village gods and the ghotul god. I describe the songs and dances of the expeditions in the chapter on that subject; these dances, which were mainly stick-dances, seemed to fall readily into a class of their own and so have been separately described. We must now examine the religious dancing of the ghotul at the ordinary festivals. 883x 535

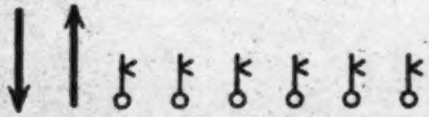
Here we find immediately a great difference between the south-west and the north and east of the Muria country. In the Chota Dongar, Karangal, Mardapal and Chalka Parganas mainly, and in villages not far from their borders, the Muria celebrate their greater festivals in typically Abujhmar Maria fashion. Elsewhere they have a distinctive Muria form of dance and drumming. Let us take the latter first.

The festival dancing of the northern and eastern Muria is not elaborate. A line of chelik, each with a large dhol drum slung from his shoulders, stands not far from the place of sacrifice. They drum very vigorously with a single stick held in the right hand and move to and fro in line. As they reach the end of their movement they drum with special vigour and shout at the turn.



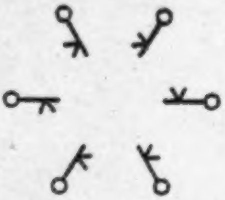
Sometimes, however, the line moves forward a certain distance, all turn round and move back, then back again.

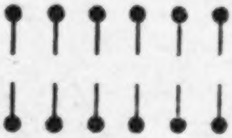
At the same time a group of boys with small turburi drums dances in a small circle, beating very fast and twirling round. The motiari form the usual double line and move to and fro (see p. 546).

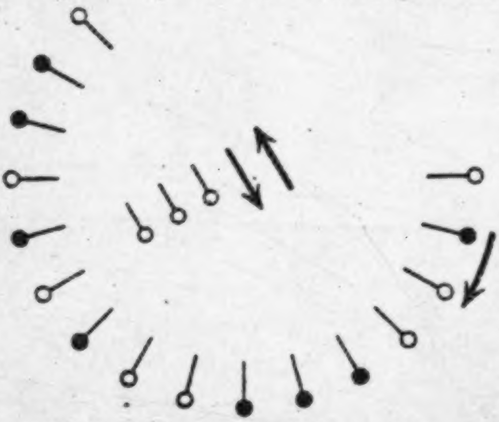


There is nothing spectacular about this dancing, though the dhol drumming is often impressive, and when flutes accompany the drums it is delightful.

It is a very different story, however, when we turn to the great festival dances of the Maria-Muria. When the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages assemble in their full dancing-dress it is a magnificent spectacle. Two conditions are necessary for the proper appreciation of this dance; it must be done in mass and it must go on all night. When a small crowd of Maria or Muria dancers assemble at a camp to give an exhibition dance, it soon becomes monotonous. But when four or five hundred dancers spread themselves over a great field, and move round to the light of torches, the blowing of hunting-horns, the clang of bells, the waving of innumerable plumes, the earth itself seems to come alive. And it goes on and on and on till you are intoxicated by the gentle rhythm, and by dawn even the outsider can appreciate the ecstasy and delight of the boys and girls who can dance untired for hours before their gods.

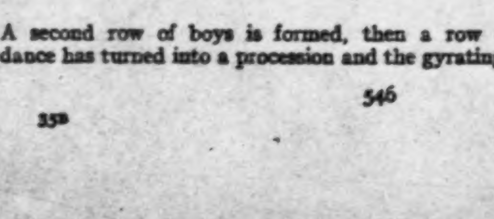






There are two main dance formations, the second developing out of the first. A line of boys and girls facing inwards, each with the right arm round the shoulder or waist of his neighbour, moves round in a great circle and very slowly. The circle moves in both directions. At the same time two or three boys in a line walk up and down the main dance to lead the singing.

The steps are very simple. In the main line each dancer moves his right foot slowly to the right, rises on his toes three times, brings the left foot up to the right, rises again on his toes, then moves to the right once more. As he does this, he jerks the bells on his buttocks. The singers in the centre simply walk forward, but with a slight pause at the end of every second step.

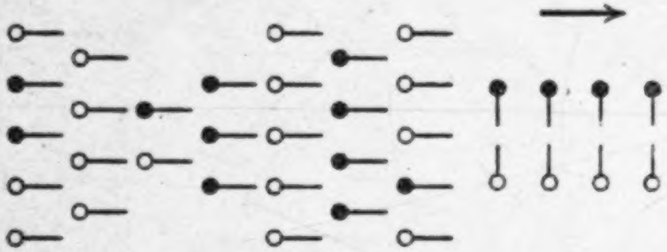


Now gradually the number of singers in the centre of the circle increases. A second row of boys is formed, then a row of girls. Soon the whole dance has turned into a procession and the gyrating line has disappeared.

883x
535

The procession walks forward and round in any direction. Or it may choose a 'beat' and walk up and down simply reversing when it reaches its limits.

This procession is, in fact, often performed as a separate dance, in this formation:



I have seen chelik and motiari dancing like this, without their finery, round and round the ghotul compound at night simply for practice and recreation.

A third festival dance is done with the little turburi drums. A line of boys with the drums faces a line of girls and they run with very quick and energetic steps to and fro, the boys drumming furiously and the girls singing.

At most of the big festivals of the Maria-Muria and Jhoria you will also see the line of boys beating the big dhol, holding it low down, half-way to the ground and beating it with a stick in the right hand.

No one should ever miss seeing a big festival in this area; it is a moving and unforgettable sight. For in addition to the formal dances of chelik and motiari, there are the individual dances of gods, mediums, the 'horses' of the gods. These leap in the air, roll on the ground, fight one another; here you may see a medium in spirited combat with a stick-god, defending himself against its blows with a small shield; there is an Anga Pen refreshing itself by disturbing a line of motiari; again two gods who are not on the best of terms chase each other, dodging in and out of the groups of amused spectators.

VIII. The Har Endanna

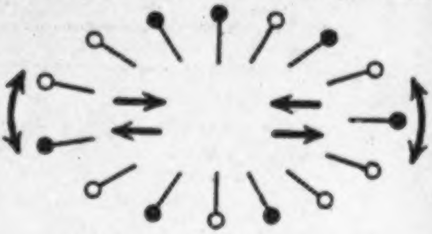
The Har Endanna vaguely recalls the dance and song of the Maria of the Abujhmar; it is as tedious, but less interesting. The dancers wear no finery; there are no bells on the buttocks to be jingled with rhythmic jerks; but the atmosphere of the dance, in its sad slow singing and its solemn movement, is the same. The Muria call it the oldest of their dances, and it may well have come down from the Abujhmar long ago.

There is a large circle of boys and girls, some hand in hand, some with arms interlaced behind the backs of their companions. The form of the dance is that of an expanding and contracting ring which moves slowly round on its own centre, first one way and then the other. The dancers take two steps forward, then two steps back again, each time moving slightly to the left or right. Their bodies sway slightly and the hands, where these are joined, swing to and fro. There is little attempt at keeping time, none at any kind of rhythm. The singing is equally slow and dreary.

The Har Endanna is danced round the marriage-booth, by girls and boys during the Diwali expeditions, and in the ghotul when there is nothing else to do.

x883 Sometimes the Har is not done hand in hand, but each dancer places his left hand on his left neighbour's
535 shoulder and lets his right hang down.

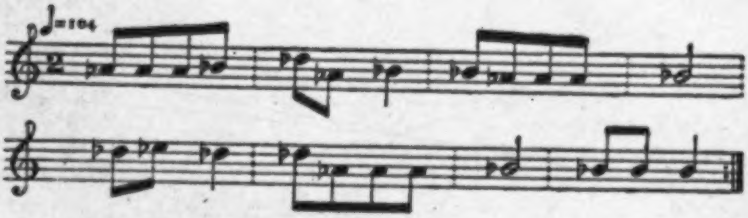
Everybody sings; they generally begin with the Lingo song, continue to describe the exploits of 'the gods, ancestors and the Raja', and use general songs without much meaning.



Songs

I

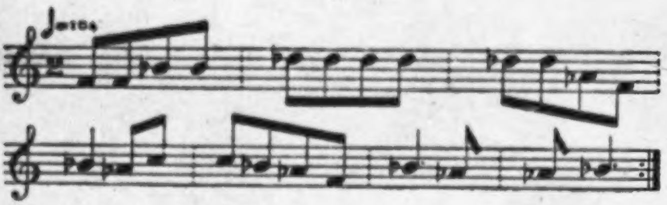
[533]



x883 *Māri reka dengāl āto āto dīpāta reka gujal āti le:*
Kākar mārile reka āti he.
535 *Konem wedur gapa āti he niya miyār mateh āti le.*
Reka tinda loha āti he āta.
539 *Hile āyo mania hāre he hāre tāne dārgon ulona hāre le,*
Tānke isi lohon hāre he.
Reka tinda dakom āti he.
Hipiya pite jori āti he jori dāhom āti le.
Reka tijin wāikom āti he.
Niya hāre āyena ayon āti he he āti nikun āti inena āti le.

On the hill the char is tall;
In the clearing it is small.
O the char on the Hill of Crows!
Were your daughter here, there would be a basket of soft bamboo.
Send her to eat char.
She is in the house, son-in-law,
But we have already drunk liquor for another,
And I cannot send her.
We will go to eat the char.
Like a pair of birds we will go.
We will come when we have eaten.
Send your daughter with me.
I will be your son-in-law,
I will call you mother-in-law.

2



883^{X}
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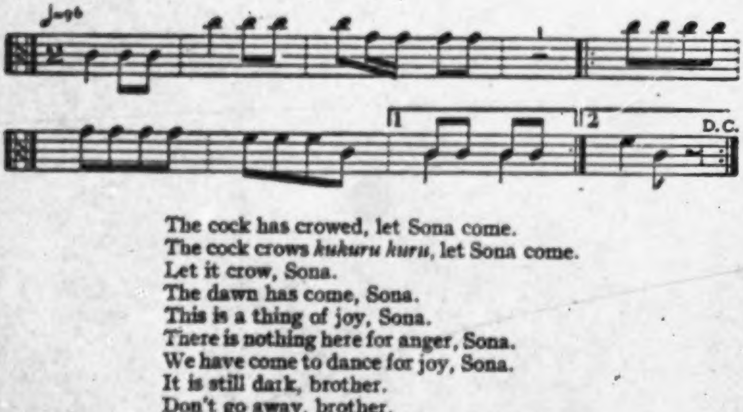
Where should I sell you, O bullock?
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai!
I will sell you to a Teli, O bullock!
Don't sell me to a Teli, brother.
Let me stay in a Muria's house, brother.
The oil-press sounds *kiur kour*.
I can't pull the oil-press, brother.
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai.

3



The cock has crowed, let Sona come.
The cock crows *kukuru kuru*, let Sona come.
Let it crow, Sona.
The dawn has come, Sona.
This is a thing of joy, Sona.
There is nothing here for anger, Sona.
We have come to dance for joy, Sona.
It is still dark, brother.
Don't go away, brother.
Let us dance together, brother, let Sona come.
The cock has crowed, let Sona come.

IX. KARSANA

883^{X}
535

A large number of dances are not called *endanna*, dances, but *karsana*, games. The distinction is not one of form, but of occasion. Endanna, or dance, is performed at special times—at a marriage, a festival, an expedition. Karsana, game, can be performed at any time, and usually is danced informally in the ghotul. Some of the karsana, of course, are real games jolly, boisterous frolics, but others are simply dances which have no deep significance.

Kokora Karsana

x883
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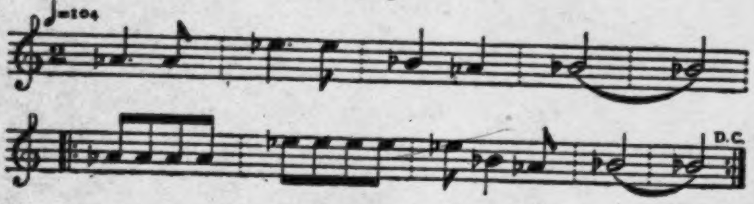
This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

[533]



1

[539]

Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

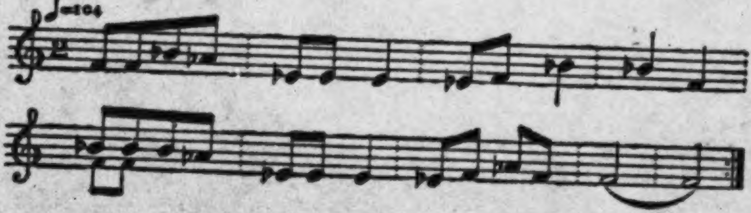
Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

[825]

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

2

[533]



O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!
O tu tumri parheli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

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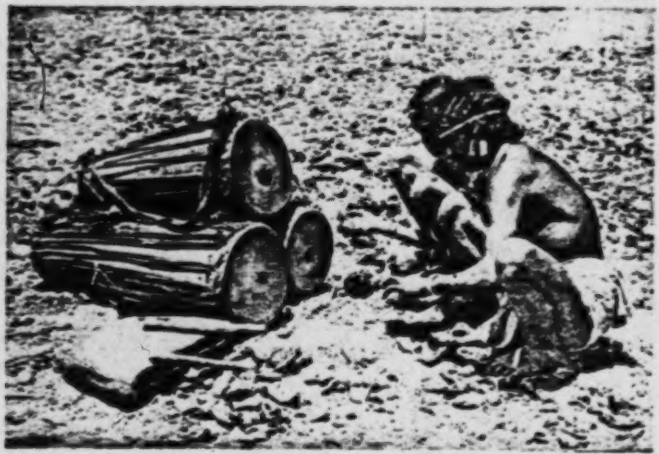
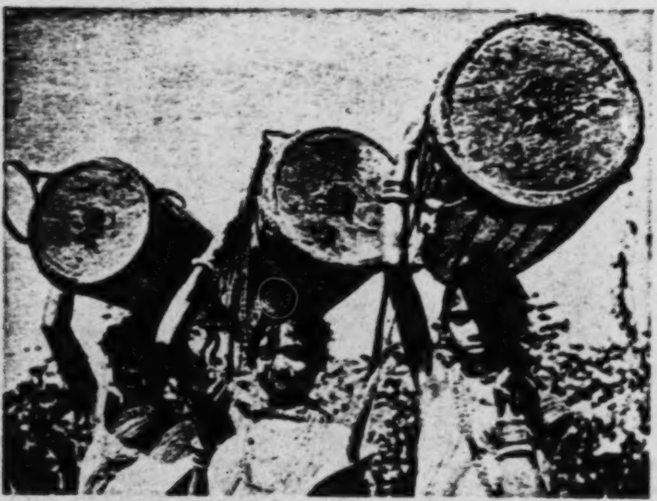
X883
534

Plate CIX



Chelik worshipping their drums at a marriage at Nayanar

Motiari carrying drums for their chelik



[p. 550 (A)]

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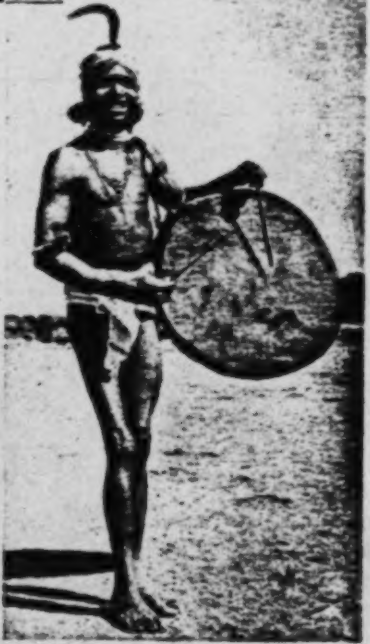
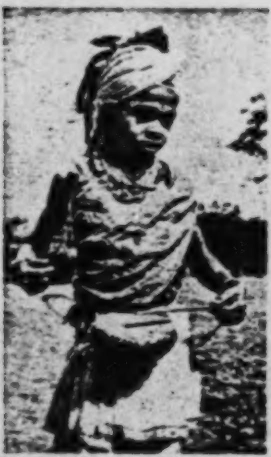
Plate CX

The Sirdar of the Sidhawand ghotul

The Danga of the Belora ghotul with daki drum



The Salki of the Kongera ghotul with kundri drum



DANCE AND SONG

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535
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O miya mari baydli baydli ātin.	Your son has gone mad.
Ona nāna wāyon na nāna wāyon rāy.	I will not come for him.

3

x883
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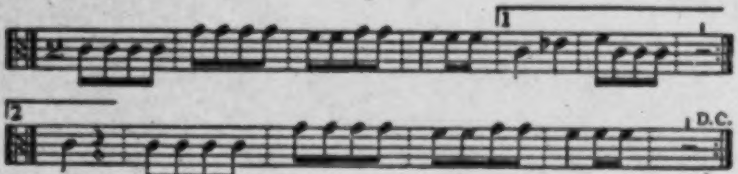
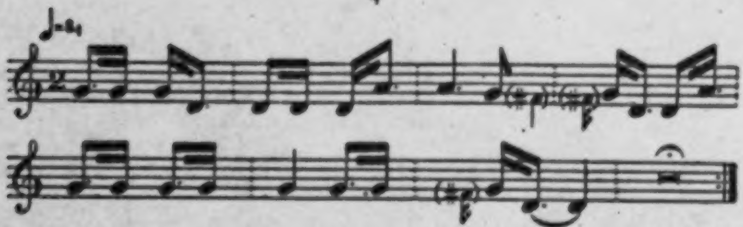


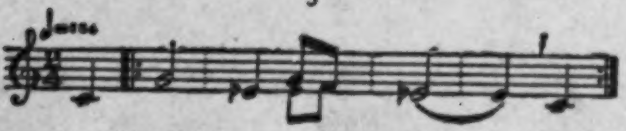
Andehnāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te!	O wearer of the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!
Kohti masri bhet pāwlu bhetum te bhetum te,	We catch the *kokti* fish,
Rahar pungār bhet pāwlu pudgānie.	We pluck the *rahar* flower.
Andehnāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te!	O boy with the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!

4



Tu tumri tumri rāndi jalkena!	Spit on the ebony tree, Call it widow, widow!
Neha jalhemaima rāndi jalhena!	Don't show off too much, O widow!
Kasur muta'paima rāndi jalhena!	Don't use a broom, or your body will swing to and fro, O widow!

5



Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.	*Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.*
Kāhechhāje daiki lābe painjana?	For whom will you bring a girl, O anklet?
Beldārhāje daiki lābe painjana.	Bring a girl for the Beldar, O anklet.
Bhuski bhuski denh lābe painjana.	Bring the fat girl, O anklet.

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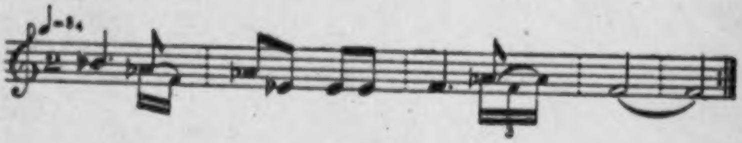
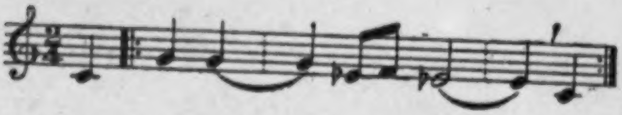


We will call Jalarsingh brother, O crane!
Whom will you call *bhauji*, O crane?
We will call Surtao *bhauji*, O crane!
What will she call you, O crane?
She will call you *dewar*, O crane!
You will trick her and eat her, O crane!

Jal-kanni (Shaking) Karsana

Girls and boys form a large circle, each with hands on the neighbour's knees. They circle round kicking out the right leg behind, moving sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, but always with the right leg kicking out and a convulsive pushing movement of the body which is bent forward.

Song



Ut gur gur ut gur gur poya layāna nanāy warre na,
Hātum hanji pātum tawāna nanāy warre na.
Weda hanji koda tawāna nanāy warre na.
Harri hanji mudiyo tawāna nanāy warre na.

When the quail cries *ut gur gur ut gur gur* I am not afraid of the Poyami girl,
When I go to the bazaar to bring cloth, I am not afraid.
When I go to the field to bring the horse, I am not afraid.
When I go above the road to bring a husband, I am not afraid.

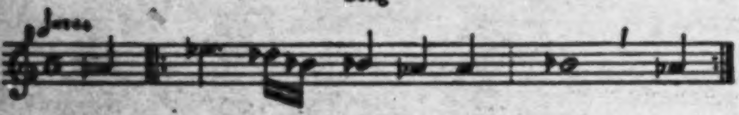
Nak Dondi Karsana

X883
535

A variant on the previous exercises is the Nak Dondi or Bhais-sand Karsana which is supposed to imitate the tethering of buffaloes. A big circle is made of boys and girls. Each puts his hands between the legs of his neighbour's so that everyone is clasping the hand of the next but one. They then circulate with a lively skip and a hop, the right foot forward, the left foot to the left, the right foot to the left and the left foot to the left with a skip. All bend forward and move their arms up and down with the result that they catch each other constantly between the legs. As this is a mixed dance its sexual implications are obvious.

DANCE AND SONG

Song



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Re re loya rela rela re re la rela

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the cowshed?
I was just clearing up the cow-dung, brother.
There was no cow-dung there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just clearing up the cow-dung.

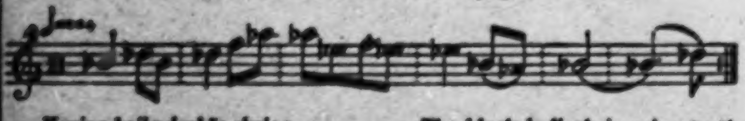
What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the garden?
I was combing my hair, brother.
There was no head nor hair there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just combing my hair.

What were you doing on the river bank in the shade of the plum tree?
What were you doing on the leaves, girl?
I was just sitting there in the shade, brother.
There was no shade there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just sitting in the shade.

Re re loyo re re loyo rela rela re re la rela.

This song was not in Gondi but in Chhattisgarhi Hindi, and recorded in Sidhawand village. Its picture of a faithless motiari being interrogated by er true lover is a common motif in ghotul songs.

Another of the songs used was recorded at Dongrigura.



Kariya baila darbār chale;	The black bullock is going to the darbar;
Kariya cho lāri mon dol wo champa kariya cho lāri mon dol.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the black bullock's shed.
Dinda leyam darbār chale.	The young girl is going to the darbar.
Dinda cho pagri mon wo champa dinda cho pagri mon phūl.	In the turban of the boy is a champa flower.
Munga baila darbār chale.	The red bullock is going to the darbar.
Munga cho lāri mon dol wo champa munga cho lāri mon dol.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the red bullock's shed.
Pandra baila darbār chale;	The white bullock is going to the darbar;
Dol champa dowra pandra cho lāri mon dol.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the white bullock's shed.
Dinda leyam darbār chale;	The maiden is going to the darbar;

x883
533
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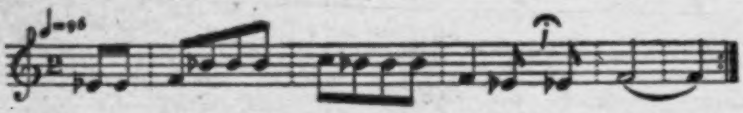
539

Dinda cho lāri men dul wo champa dinda layan cho lāri men dul.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the maiden's shed.

Ujur (White) Karsana

Two lines of girls face one another and dance to and fro singing.



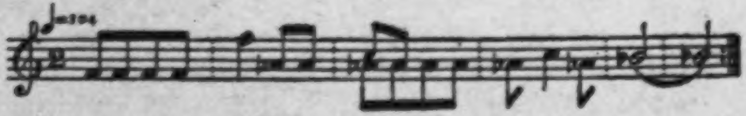
Ujur ujur handār te dadākor mārte	From the white white corner of thirty hills,
Pais oya hewom,	We will not let her be taken away,
Ujur ujur handr te dadākor mārte yer miya hewom,	We will not let them bathe,
Ujur ujur handr te dadākor mārte nei tari woykom,	We will not let them anoint her with oil,
Ujur ujur handār te dadākor mārte lagir paya hewom.	We will not let them perform the Lagir.

All the references here are to the marriage ceremony.

Durpa Dāndi Karsana (Plate CXXII)

The Durpa Dandi or Game of the Lotus Root is also called Chingri Bunbutti. The leading girl puts her right foot on her left knee. Another girl stands on her right and puts her left leg up over the leading girl's right leg, thus supporting it almost at a right angle to her body. The next girl does the same until there is a complete circle of girls each standing on one leg with the other tucked up in the air. This is supposed to represent a flower supported on its stem. Then the girls begin to sing and each jumps up a little on her one leg and claps her hands.

Song



Durpa dāndi dāndi layor jāmdār jāmdār!	O the lotus plant boy, *jām* leaf, *jām* leaf!
Dāndi tori dāwāl layor jāmdār jāmdār.	Go to pick the plant, boy.
Dinda layor āleke layor jāmdār jāmdār,	If you are unmarried, boy,
Jāti āwār āwār dewsi wāyki jāmdār jāmdār.	You will come pushing through the fence.
Pila hālār āleke layor jāmdār jāmdār,	If you are the father of children,
Pila wonde hīs mandaki jāmdār jāmdār.	You will be busy looking after them.

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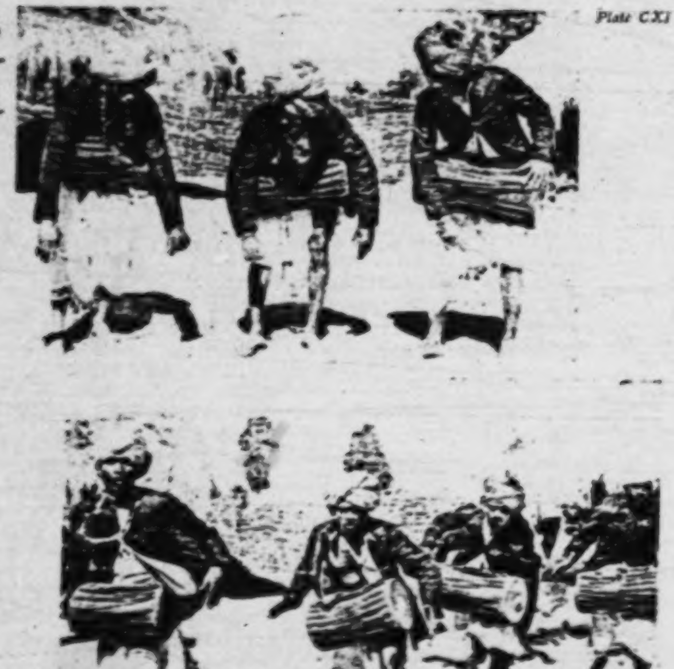
535
534

Plate CXI



Movements in a Mandri dance at Khutgaon

[p.554 (A)]

x 883
291
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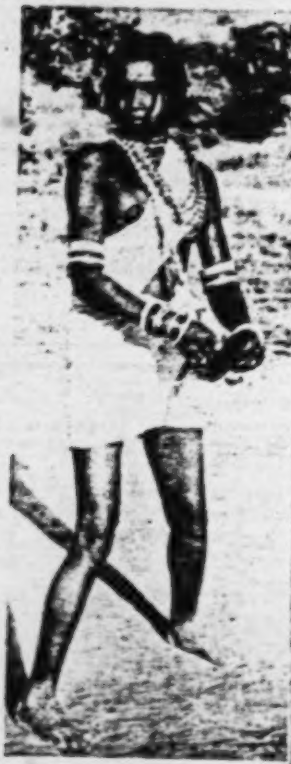
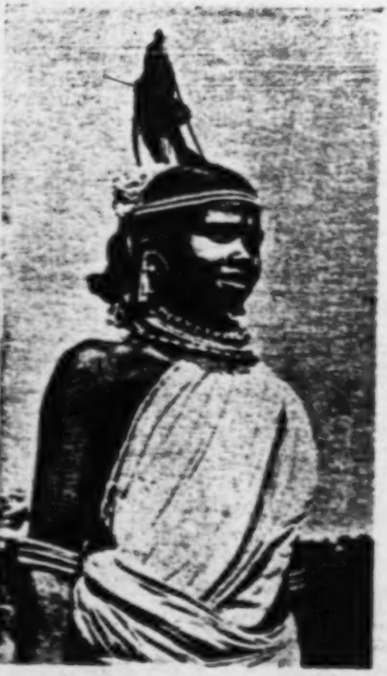
Plate CXII



The Kotwarin of the Kongera ghotul



The Malko of the Markabera ghotul

DANCE AND SONG

Guguring Gus Karsana (*Plate CXXIII*)

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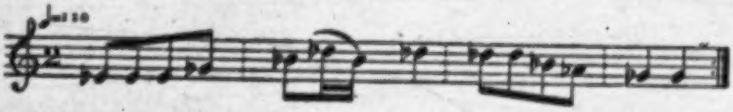
A line of girls, each with her hands on her hips, fingers to the front, runs round and round like a snake. This is a very attractive dance as I saw it in Alor in 1941. The girls ran quickly and gracefully round and round and in and out, bending their bodies slightly.



Hāhki mend kohla usta.	I husk the grain in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolia guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
Hāhki mend wanji usta.	I husk the rice in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolia guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
Hāhki mend kore usta.	I husk the pulse in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolia guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*

The word *guguring* is used to describe *khulti* pulse that is boiled whole, without being ground.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GAMES

I

THE number and variety of Muria games is remarkable. The games (*harsana*) are played in the ghotul, some of them indoors, some out in the compound and usually on ordinary occasions. The word '*harsana*' meaning 'a game' is distinguished from *endanna* 'a dance' rather by its occasion than by its form. Many dances are not called *endanna* because they are not performed either at a marriage, a festival or an expedition. They are casual, go-as-you-please affairs for entertainment, and so, though the form is that of a dance, they are called *harsana* or games.

Some of the games are excellent exercise. They have the same kind of importance that drill has for an army; they teach the ghotul members to move together and to move at once. Others should probably be called little dramas rather than games and they too have their value in developing the wit and imagination of the boys and girls as well as being great fun. There are many domestic games which imitate such tiresome household duties as the husking of rice, the drawing of water, cooking, gathering leaves and fruit. I doubt if these are intended to teach the children anything; what Muria girl needs to be taught to draw water or husk rice? Their educational purpose is rather to make these tasks more attractive and to bridge the gulf between the conflicting claims of home and ghotul. When a thing is turned into a game it is less like work. On the other hand, the marriage games seem to be definitely intended to practise the chelik and motiari in the complicated ritual of a wedding, in which they play so conspicuous a part.

But perhaps the majority of the games are meant only as entertainment and to pass the time. Some of them are certainly adapted to serve the same function as the dances in the ghotul routine. They prepare the boys and girls for tumescence. Others are the natural bubbling over of youth and high spirits.

I have roughly classified the games in this chapter, but it must be remembered that the Muria themselves would never think of such a schematic arrangement.

II. Games of Little Children

I begin first with the games played by very little children.

These are generally noisy, riotous and formless, but often show considerable spontaneity of imagination. The children make little propellers with leaves and allow the wind to spin them round. They make all sorts of dolls with mud and clay and decorate them with their ornaments. At the Hindu Nawa festival, which is generally observed throughout Bastar, the potters make toy grindstones, bullocks, horses, earthen wheels to be attached to little carts, cooking-pots and tiny hearths. After the children have played with these for a few days, those that remain unbroken are sometimes put on the roof of the cattle-shed. The children, however, are not dependent on the potters and like making mud-pies and dolls with earth mixed in their own urine. But generally the small children share the games of their elders, nor is there any taboo or bar on their doing so.

Spinning-tops are used, but not widely and only for amusement. The top illustrated in Fig. 16 was made of a small gourd, through which a bamboo

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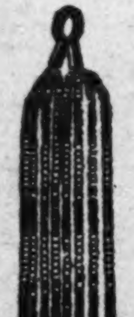


Fig. 143.
Pendant of red and white beads, attached to a ring in the ear

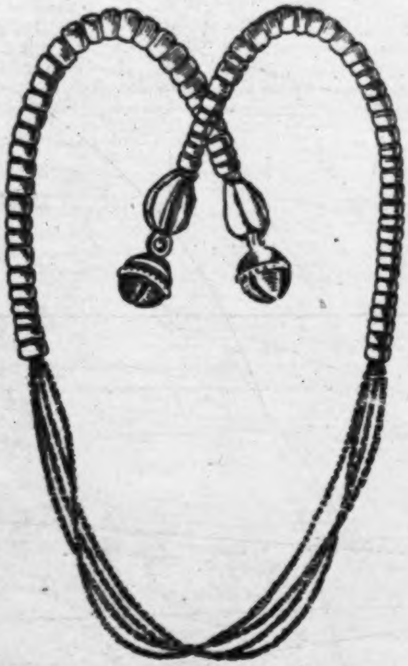
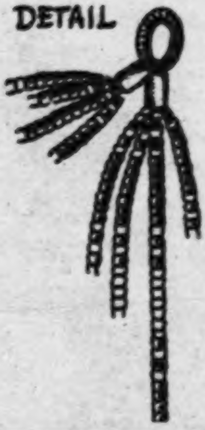


Fig. 144. *Murgal Pauniyer* necklace. The large beads are white and the small are mainly white but occasionally light blue



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peg was driven. It was spun with the help of a carefully fashioned wooden handle, perforated at one end, through which the string was threaded. Boys sometimes fight with their tops against each other.[1]

III. Household Games

I will now give some account of those games which imitate the tasks of every day, rice-husking, drawing water from the well, cooking, cleaning and using dishes, gathering fruit, making a cart, sending grain to market. Such games are mostly played by girls, though there is no bar on boys joining in.

Wanjing or Rumela Karsana (*Plate CXXVIII*)

This game, which is called the Wanjing (husking), Rumela (grinding), Pindi Usna (grinding flour) and Chakki (grindstone) Karsana, is very popular. Girls gather in a compact group. One of them sits on the ground in the middle, holding a long stick in her hand. The others grasp the stick and lift it up and down singing various songs, of which I will give three examples.

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1

Bad bai pindi use rumela rumela?	Which of the girls is husking grain?
Alosa bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Alosa Bai is husking grain.
Wirik wārek kema dāda rumela rumela.	She should not pound carelessly, brother.
Bashen usmāī paiwāl dāda rumela rumela.	She never did it before, brother.
Sālo bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Salo Bai is husking grain.

2

Kāy dhān kāy dhān, suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Mot dhān mot dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Coarse rice, coarse rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kabri dhān kabri dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Mixed rice, mixed rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kuji dhān kuji dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Fine rice, fine rice, Suliari, O the orange!

---

[1] Tops are common among the Naga tribes, less so in other parts of India. I have recorded their use among the Bhuiya and Juang. The Sema Naga use tops only after the sowing is over, and the Chang fine a man who uses one at any time other than during or just after sowing. The Lhota have the same rule, though they inflict no fines. See Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 104; Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 123; Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 84; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 281.

GAMES

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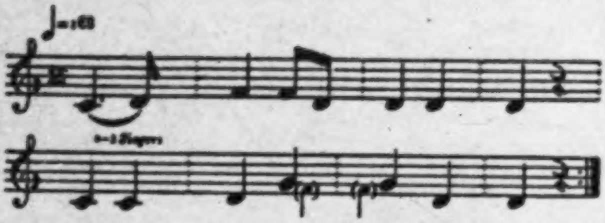

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Dhān kutai rahew wo dai.	I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis musar māris wo dai.	Holding the rice-husker he beat me.
Luga dharke parayonw wo dai;	I took my cloth and ran away;
Wahi bāt ais wo dai.	He followed me along the road.
Sind buta men lukonw wo dai.	I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayow wo dai:	I went to my elder sister's house:
Bāsi pejla rihais wo dai.	She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dāda ghar gayow wo dai:	I went to my elder brother's house:
Kukri sikār khawais wo dai.	He gave me chicken to eat.

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The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:

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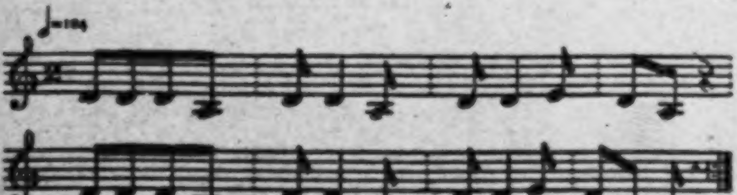

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539.

Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

---

[1] Ba-ila boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 257.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydei dhara*, pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (Plate CXXXIX)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godel-gara Karsana

This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

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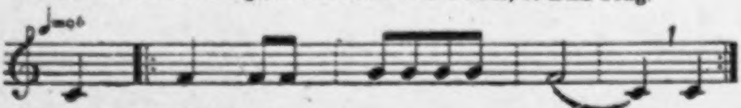
Other Games

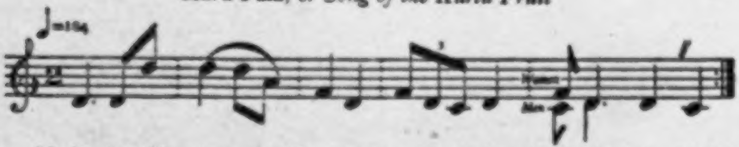
The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.



Uth uth re thări thări mări!	Pick up, pick up the plate!
Pur genta unding.	The hill is burning.
Măta maoli dolinta dolinta.	This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Uth uth re kasela kasela masela.	Pick up, pick up the pot!
Uth uth re sura mura mura.	Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit



Mudur lopădăng kuru panding săngo.	There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Sangen kei datu ale săngo.	Let us go together, Sango.
Panding tinda dăhăi ale săngo.	We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Rende ălkăng keit ale re săngo ui săngo ri suy.	Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

---

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugao represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

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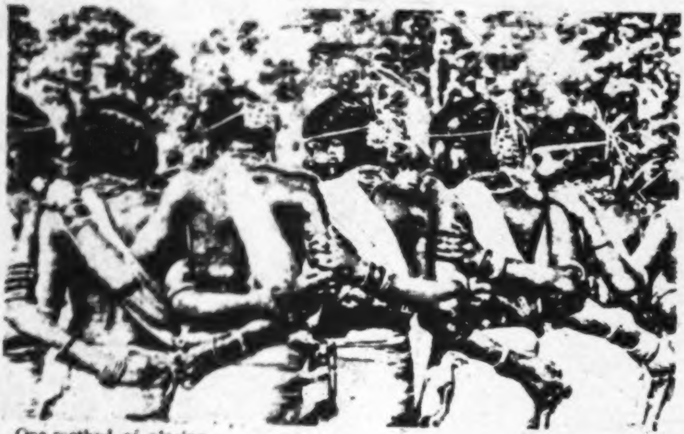
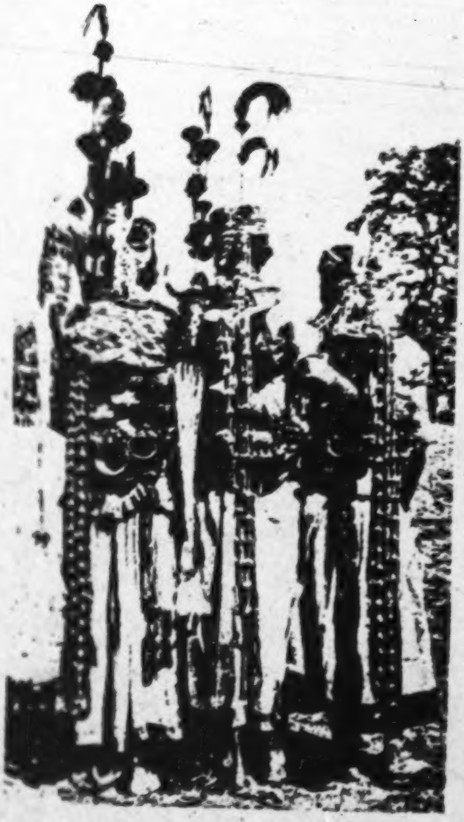


One method of placing the arms in the Hulki dance

Plate CXIII



Chelik of Aturgaon, showing buttock bells and cowrie streamers

[p. 360(N)]

Plate CXIV

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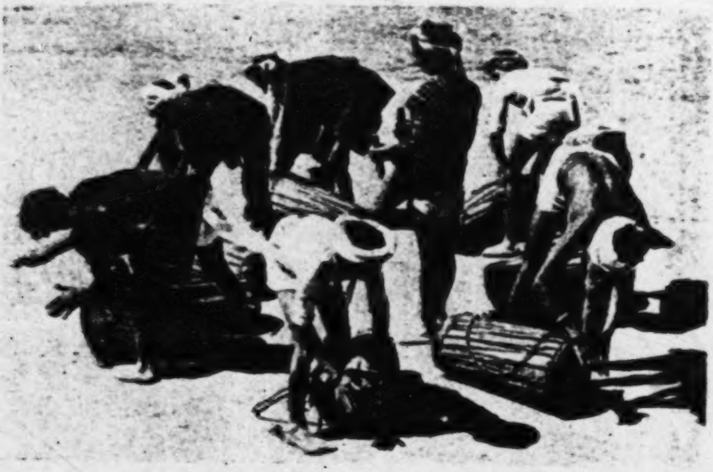
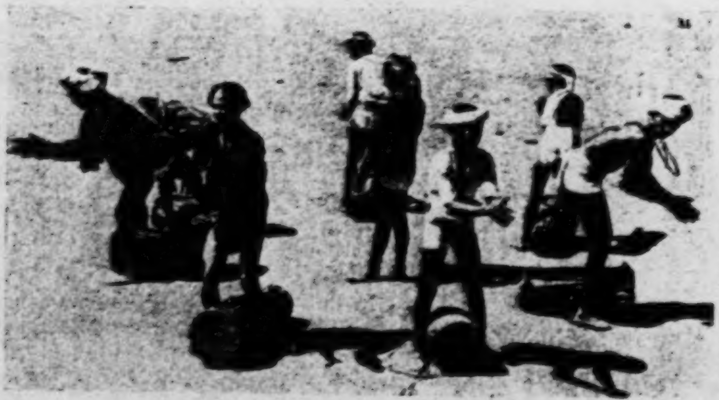


Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga



[p.560(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXV

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Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560 (c)]

Plate CXVI

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Mandri and Relo dancing at Kachora

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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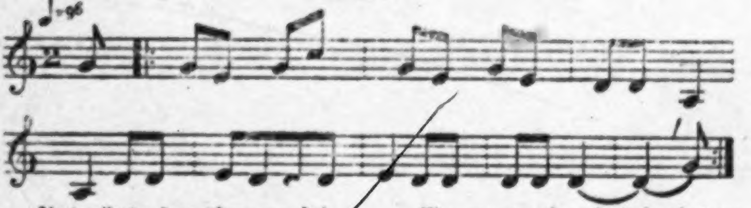
GAMES

Mango Game



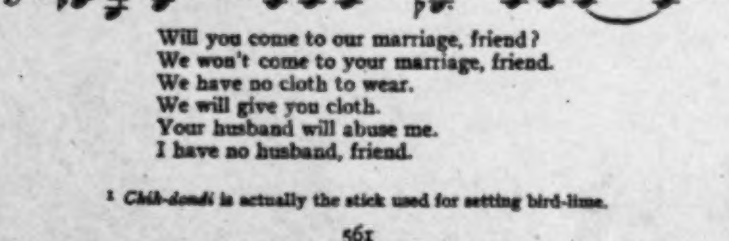
Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai.	The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli?	Which girl has picked a basketful?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar?	Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar.	Julpi is carrying the load.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli?	Which girl carries the basketful?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli.	Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāta[1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling murweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.



Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

---

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

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[539]

The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

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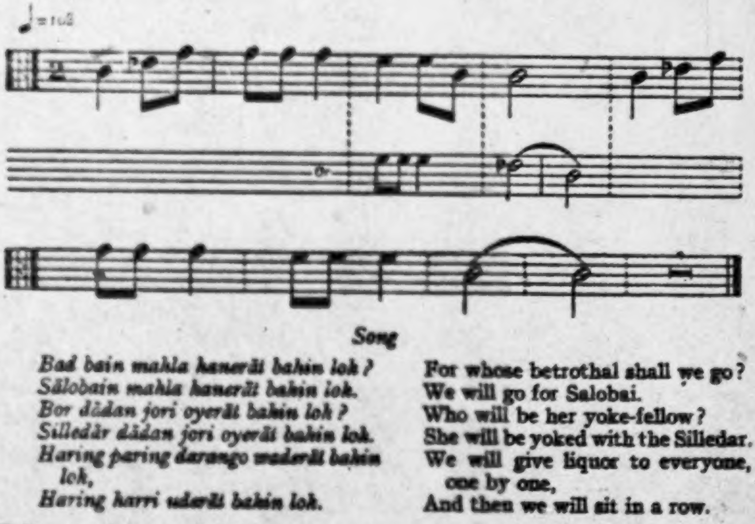

Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanerdt bahin loh?	For whose betrothal shall we go?
Sālobain mahla hanerdt bahin loh.	We will go for Salobai.
Bor dādan jori oyerdt bahin loh?	Who will be her yoke-fellow?
Silledār dādan jori oyerdt bahin loh.	She will be yoked with the Silledar.
Haring paring darango waderdt bahin loh,	We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
Haring harri uderdt bahin loh.	And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

GAMES

Thief Games

883 524 In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jāwa*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Hapang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.

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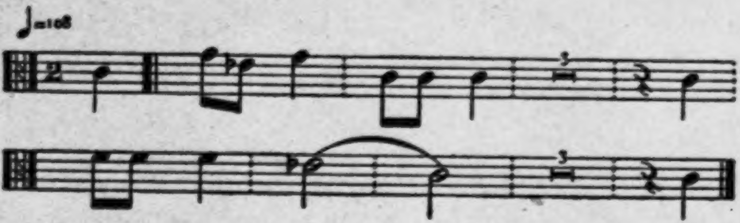

Song

Lito lito bānga parela;	Bunches of brinjal are ready;
Kāwar hāwar kon torela ?	Who picked them load by load?
[539] *Kāwar hāwar jolma torela.*	Jolma picked a load of them.
Chhai chhai bori kon bechela ?	Who sold them six to a *bori* ?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.	Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Nakti paisa kon jhokela ?	Who took the worthless money?
Nakti paisa jalām jhokela.	Jalam took the worthless money.

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

Donga Karsana (*Plate CXXV*)

Another type of thief game resembles 'Oranges and Lemons'. In Kuntpadar and Koilibera, it was played this way. Two girls stood with joined hands facing each other. They lowered their hands and a line of boys and girls stepped over them. They raised their hands and the line went underneath. Suddenly the girls caught a boy. The leader of the line asked, 'Why have you caught our man?' The girls replied, 'He has stolen chillies'. 'How many times?' 'Only once.' 'Then let him go.' 'No more, no more.' He was now in prison. The girls made him husk rice by beating his hands; then they shook and beat him 'as if he were in a winnowing-fan'. They pulled his ears—this was the picking of leaves. At last they both hung round his neck to show that he was loaded with rice chaff, chillies and onions, and let him go.

In Sidhawand it was played a little differently. The two girls represented, for some obscure reason, a 'boat'. When they caught a boy, the leader said, 'Why have you caught our friend?' 'He's been stealing rice.' 'How much?' 'Only a little.' Then the girls punished him, pushing him and pulling him about 'as the police do in jail' until the victim cried, 'Come, my queen, eat milk and rice' and they let him go.[1]

Min Karsana

The Muria, like the Munda,[2] have their own version of Blind Man's Buff. Boys and girls form a big circle round a blindfolded boy who has to squat down and hop about trying to catch them. When he catches someone, he feels the legs and tries to guess who it is, while the following dialogue is repeated:

'Blind man, blind man, what fish is this?'
'It is a bod fish.'
'Blind man, blind man, where are its bones?'
'In the river.'
'Blind man, blind man, how many bones?'
'Three cart-loads.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is its oil?'
'In the pot.'
'Blind man, blind man, how much oil?'
'Three pots of oil.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is the flesh?'
'In the basket.'
'Blind man, blind man, whom are you holding?'

If he guesses correctly—and it is surprising how hard they find it to guess right—the blind man is released and whoever he caught must take his place.

Kor Karsana (*Plate CXXXIII*)

This is the cock-fighting game. The children divide into two parties. The leader of each side secretly chooses one of his girls or boys and covers the

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[1] S. C. Roy has given a full account of the Kantara-inu or jack-fruit game played by the Munda and Kharia, which is not unlike the brinjal-stealing and other thief games of the Muria.—S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 492ff. and S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 463. See also *The Baiga*, p. 463.

The Ba-ila have a game to represent thefts from a melon patch.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 253. The Trobriand Islanders imitate the stealing of bananas.—Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 206.

[2] Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 491.

Plate CXVII

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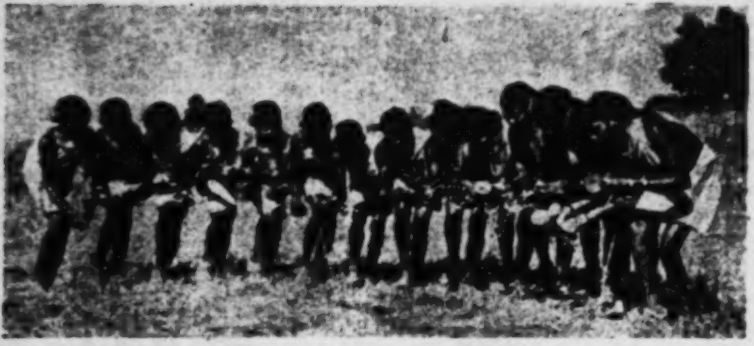

Relo dancers accompanying the boys

Mandri dancers on their knees

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[p. 564 (A)]

Plate CXVIII

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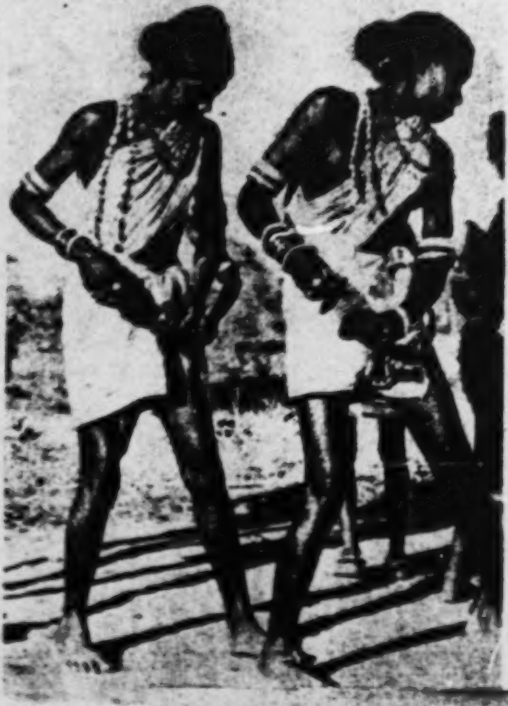
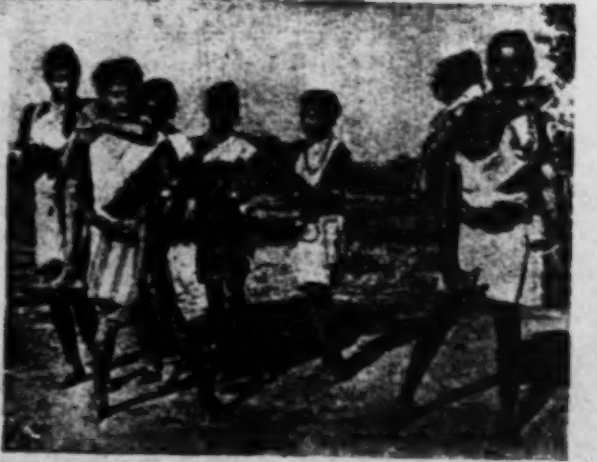


Marriage dancers at
Kachora



Motiari of
Kachora
practise the
marriage dance

[p.564 (R)]

'cock' with a blanket. Then they bring the 'cocks' forward and make them squat down, facing each other and bending forward as the fighting cocks do. Each 'owner' goes over to the other's cock, pokes it, tickles it, and says, 'Crow, cock, crow!'—at which the cock whistles—to try to see who it is. They each have to guess, whereon the cocks stand up throwing off their blankets. Whoever guesses right wins the game.

The Hawk Games

These Gidal Karsana[1] or Kor Karsana take different forms on a general pattern. I will first give the Berma version.

The hawk gives its adze and chisel to a farmer, who gives them to his hen. In other words the boy playing the hawk gives a bit of wood to the leader of a line of children. The leader is the farmer, the children behind him his chickens. The hen hands the adze and chisel to the next hen and so all down the line. The last hen is very hungry and gives the tools to a goodwife in the village in exchange for a morsel of gruel. After a time the hawk returns and demands its tools from the farmer. He says, 'Ask my hen for them'. She says, 'I gave them to my neighbour'. And so all down the line. The last hen says, 'I was very hungry and I sold the tools for a morsel of gruel'. Back comes the hawk to the farmer and says that since the tools are not to be found it will have to eat the hens instead.

The farmer shakes his head, and says, 'Well, who is greater, you or me?' The hawk says, 'I am the greater, of course'. 'Let us see', says the man, and they measure themselves with arms outstretched, jumping into the air. Then the farmer says, 'Well, eat if you can. But will you eat sitting or standing?' The hawk promises only to eat the hens when they are standing. At once it pounces on a hen. But she as quickly sits down and is safe. Then the hawk runs round and round trying to carry off the hen at the end of the line, but the leader swings the line round to oppose it, and whenever the hawk approaches, the hens have only to squat down to be safe. You would think the hawk would get little to eat, but it is surprising how stupid poultry are! As they run round, the hens sing.

Tin koliya mirvam gugurgum.	Eat, jackal. Don't fall down, *gugurgum.*
Ada kāko koliya gugurgum.	This is uncle jackal, *gugurgum.*

The song suggests that originally the game was of a jackal, not a hawk, that tried to catch the hens.

I saw the game played slightly differently in Masora. Here a line of children, widely separated, represent pegs in the ground. The chickens run round and round the pegs, chased by the hawk. Once they can catch hold of the pegs they are safe. This is easy for the chickens, and so the hawk generally gets a 'dog' to help him.

In Masora they also play the Hawk Game with mice instead of chickens. There is a long line of mice, first he-mice, then she-mice. Their Raja is Kundaimama. Along comes the hawk and gives a comb, in other words a small

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[1] The Munda have a similar game of 'Fox and Hen'.—Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 495. The Kharia play the Chil-hor-hor, or 'Vulture and Chickens'.—Roy, *The Kharias*, p. 465. So do the Ho.—D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V (1925), p. 190.

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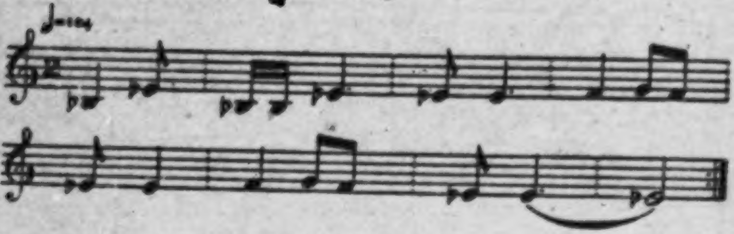
stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song

[533]



[539]

The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (*Plates CXXX and CXXXI*)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud kuruch*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

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[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

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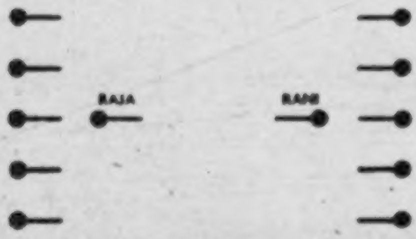
The gardeners now hire two men to carry the roots to the river for washing. There is a lot of discussion about this, but at last two 'coolies' are willing to work for four annas a day. The coolies get a stout pole and put it over their shoulders. Two or three girls and boys catch hold of the pole and are lifted up hanging to it and so carried a little way off, where the coolies bump them on the ground, and then rub them all over with dust and rubbish. This is the washing of the roots. They are bumped to remove any superfluous earth that may be clinging to them. The owners of the field stand by abusing the coolies. 'Why don't you wash that root properly? We'll cut your pay' and so on. When a big girl is carried out they cry, 'There's a fine fat root; we'll eat it tonight for supper'. If a girl is heavily tattooed, they say, 'What are these marks on that root? It's eaten by grubs, it's full of worms. Throw it away'. Of another they say, 'That root's gone rotten, it's stinking, give it to the coolies'. Then the coolies bring the roots back and pile them in a heap, throwing the boy-roots on top of the girl-roots where possible.

Now the roots are to be cooked. The children sit round in a circle, their feet extended to the middle. In the centre the owner and his friend dig with a stick. The wife fans the roots with a leaf. The roots wriggle their feet to represent flames. The grass and earth dug up by the owner is thrown on the heads of the roots. The wife goes round pinching them to see if they are 'done' or not. In some villages half the children lie down with their feet to the centre, and the others catch them under the shoulders and swing them round in a big circle.

At last, some of the roots are sold for chips of wood—the bargaining gives endless opportunities for 'patter'—and the rest are eaten by being hit twice on the back.

Raja Rani Karsana

The motiari sit in two rows facing each other. In front of each row sits a girl representing the Raja and Rani.



The Rani's party sings, 'What will you give her?' The Raja's party replies, 'We will bring pots for her'. But this is not enough. The Rani's party replies, 'But what will you give her?' The Raja's party answers again, 'We will bring ornaments'. And so on interminably, through every present that has ever been given by a Muria to his motiari. But as they are singing, the Raja is shifting nearer and nearer to the Rani, until at last 'he' is near enough and he can jump on her and carry her away.

Another song, in Halbi, sung during this game, was recorded at Gawari. After each line is the refrain *Jāy Rānī* (or *Rāja*) *dhire dhire rego rānī dhire dhire jāwo.*

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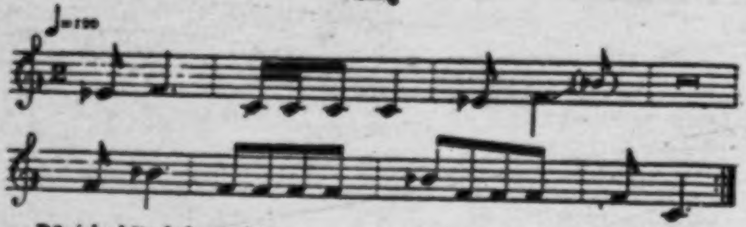
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

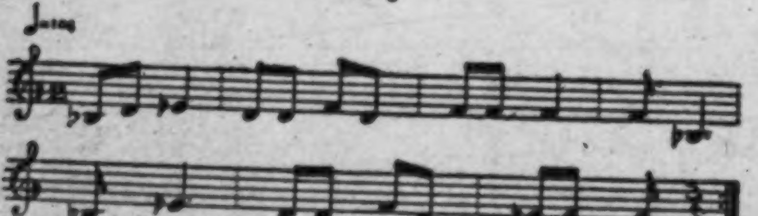


Rānicho bāta bahania lānien;	For the Rani we are bringing an armlet; O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta darpanj lānien;	For the Raja we are bringing a mirror; O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta paijjan lānien;	For the Rani we are bringing anklets; O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta dhoti lānien;	For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti; O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta churi lānien;	For the Rani we are bringing bangles; O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta topi lānien;	For the Raja we are bringing a hat; O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta sandra lānien.	For the Rani we are bringing a sari; O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajana Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song



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Tucho hīje tucho hīje khilwān anānis mucho belorī.	For you, for you, I have brought an ear-ring, my love.

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Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho khilwān he tucho khilwān he!	Your ear-ring, your ear-ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho hāje tucho hāje māla anāwle mucho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a necklace, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho māla he tucho māla he!	Your necklace, your necklace!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho hāje tucho hāje mundi anāwle mucho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a ring, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho mundi he tucho mundi he!	Your ring, your ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!

They continue the song indefinitely, using the names of every possible ornament.

VI. Games of Animals and the Chase

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As we have seen, the Muria are good hunters, and like all aboriginals are greatly interested in the behaviour of animals.[1] They have games to imitate various animals and birds, and some of their most dramatic displays are about the chase. In this they resemble, though they do not emulate, the remarkable bird and animal dances of the Juang and Pauri Bhuiya. One of these imitates the strut of a peacock, another the ambling gait of a bear, yet another the unwieldy movements of an elephant. In one exciting Juang variant, girls play the part of vultures devouring a corpse, and again, lying face downwards on the ground, they wriggle like snakes.

Goihal Karsāna (*Plate CXL*)

This is the Lizard game. A boy gets down on his left leg and right hand and sticks his right leg out behind. Then he moves rapidly forward, first on one hand and then on the other, while he beats his chest with the free hand. The right leg always remains stuck out behind like a tail.

Hupen-korikua Karsana

In this a boy imitates a mouse scratching itself, though he might equally well be almost any other animal. He lies flat on his face supporting himself on his hands and propels himself along by jerky movements of his bottom in an amusing way.

Tadha or Niral Karsana

A small boy wears a mask of white cloth. Two sticks are placed inside to make a mouth which opens and shuts. The effect is bizarre in the extreme. The boy is covered with a blanket and supported on the shoulders of two friends and his feet are carried by a third. They hop round and round with him while he opens and shuts his mouth and jerks his head. Sometimes he charges about on all fours. He is supposed to represent a frog but in some places he is called a panther.

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[1] When, some years ago, I went with a party of aboriginals to Calcutta I found them more interested in the Zoo than in anything else.

Mogral Karsana (*Plate CXXXII*)

This is the Crocodile game. A boy is held between two others by the waist. A third clutches his legs. They walk forward, and the boy in the middle sways his arms and tries to keep his head and shoulders upright.

Yen Karsana

This is the Elephant game and is played by five boys. Two of them go down on their hands and knees, two climb up and lean forward supporting themselves by their hands on each other's shoulders. A fifth climbs right up on top. Then they go round until they fall over.

Koda Karsana (*Plate CXXXV*)

I have recorded two different forms of this Horse game. The first is played by three boys. Two stand holding sticks at either end in their hands. Two other sticks are laid across their shoulders. A third boy climbs up and sits between them on the upper sticks and supports his legs on the sticks held below. He then drives the two boys forward as though they were a horse.

In the second version two boys get down on their hands and knees, a third stands between them bending slightly forward. A fourth stands on the backs of the kneeling boys and places his hands on the shoulders of the third. So placed they go round and round.

Purar-upihana Karsana (*Plate CXXXIV*)

This imitates the wood-pigeon. Two boys sit opposite each other, putting their feet under the other's buttocks. Each in turn half rises and claps his hands in the air. They swing to and fro, and rise up and down in a very attractive movement.

Hunting Games [1]

The Muria hunting games are exciting and realistic. One type represents the chase after a gaur or sambhar; the other shows the defence of the cowherd against the tiger that attacks his cattle.

I saw an excellent hunt in Sidhawand. A gaur was made by throwing a blanket over two boys. The head was a winnowing-fan doubled over and covered with cloth and real horns were attached to it. A tail of grass and peacock feathers was hung behind. The gaur came on the scene, trotted round, grazed, sat down and went to sleep. Presently a party of hunters appeared. They were nearly naked, smeared all over with ashes, their hair

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[1] Mills has an excellent description of hunting games played by the Rengma Naga.—Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 122f. The Lakher have an Elephant Hunting game.—Parry, op. cit., p. 188. The Kond have a dance that represents a bison hunt; 'one man with the horns and skin of the animal takes to his heels followed by the remainder, who capture him after a brief chase, and bear him back as a trophy'.—Dalton, op. cit., p. 300. Compare also the Lion Hunting game of the Ba-ila.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 237ff. Haddon saw boys at Veifaa acting 'very realistically' a pig hunt and a kangaroo drive.—A. C. Haddon, 'Notes on Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 289.

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flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

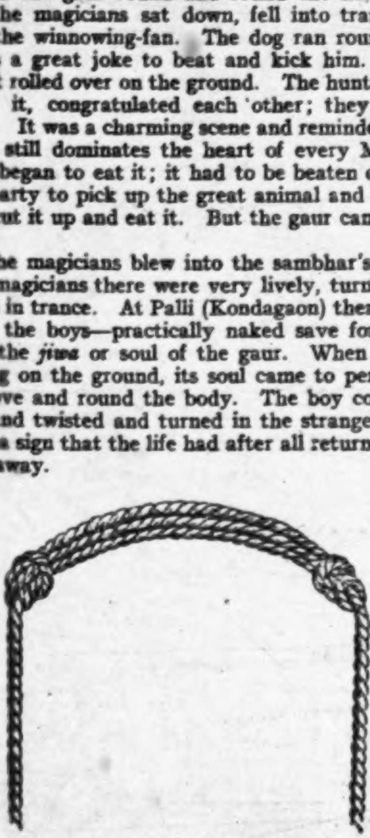

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FIG. 145. Sling used in hunting

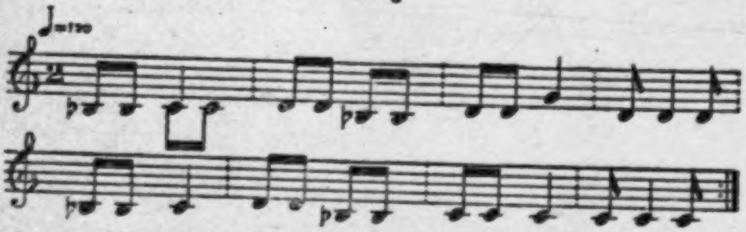
In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song

[533]



[534]

The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Berma is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

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[1] With these games, compare the Tuyu-meroom of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

Plate CXIX

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Chelik and motiari of Aturgaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance

Chelik of Toinar doing samdhi-par

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Plate CXX

Festival dancing at Kongera

Dancers marching in a procession

[p.572 (8)]

GAMES

Song

Udüt sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Sit friend, sit friend Parbodela!
Nitüt sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Stand friend, stand friend Parbodela!
Ade sāngi nirūl sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	There is a panther, friend Parbodela!
Witüt sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Let us run away, friend Parbodela!

VII. Games as Exercise

People who work as hard as the Muria should not need further exercise, but many of the ghotul games are in fact admirably designed to test the strength, develop the muscles and train the eye and the intelligence. It is curious that competitive jumping and the tug-of-war, so popular among the Naga, are not found in the ghotul.[1]

Tod-de Pehekana Karsana[2]

A boy sits down on the ground and someone puts a ring behind his back. He has to lean backwards with arms outstretched tilting his head over and back until he can pick up the ring with his mouth. This is a very difficult feat, and generally the boy falls over before he can accomplish it.

Kap-munrs Tehana (Pulling-up) Karsana

The boy lies flat on his face, raises his legs up into the air and grasps them with his hands behind his back so that he is lying supported on his stomach with legs and feet above him. Another boy puts his hands into the loop thus formed and swings him over his back.

Gudha (Rolling-over) Karsana

A boy bends down with his head to the ground, and another boy lies on him. The first boy catches hold of his loin-cloth from below and he catches hold of the first boy's loin-cloth from above. The first boy then hoists him up and throws him over backwards. A glance at Plate CXXXIX will elucidate this necessarily obscure explanation.

Kal-tehana (Legs-up) Karsana

A big boy clasps his wrist with one hand, a small boy stands on his palm holding the other's head with his hands. Then the first boy lifts him off the ground and walks about with him till he is exhausted and has to let him fall.

Kadna (Wrestling) Karsana (Plate CXXXVIII)

In this game a boy climbs up over one boy and under another. Two boys, A and B, stand facing each other, clasping one another's arms. Boy C leans,

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[1] Compare Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 120ff.; *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 85f.; Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 102f.; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 109. Among the Trobriand Islanders 'the favourite and most important game is the tug-of-war'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

[2] The Gondi words mean 'Lifting up with the mouth'.

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head downwards, against the back of A and gets his legs round A's chest. Then he pulls himself into a sitting posture with his legs now round A's waist, climbs up over A's head, descends through the arms of A and B and dives down between B's legs.

A Pulling-up Game (*Plate CXXXVIII*)

Two boys sit facing each other, placing their feet sole to sole. They hold hands or a stick and try to pull each other off the ground.[1]

Gudina Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

Girls sit on their knees in a long line, bending right over with their heads between their knees, and sing in a rather muffled way. The girl at one end heaves herself up and rolls over and over along the line till she reaches the other end. Each girl does this in turn. They sing the following song:

[539]

Dhondera wāndera dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera,* if it is a girl preserve her.
Peki āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera,	She will fetch water in an earthen pot,
Tānd to yer tatārde dhondera wāndera,	She will bring roots,
Māting karsi tatārde dhondera wāndera.	She will bring leaves.
Aking kois tatārde dhondera wāndera.	If it is a boy, throw him away.
Pekāl āteke wātna dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera,* if it is a girl preserve her.
Peki āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera.	

I would not like to read more into this song than I should. On the face of it, it is very interesting indeed. Many a Muria would rather have a daughter than a son.

Karmata Karsana (*Plate CXXIV*)

Two lines of girls face one another and join hands. The boys pick up a smaller girl and throw her onto the 'bed' thus formed. Sometimes she supports herself by placing her hands on the shoulders of the two leading girls, sometimes she lies prone, sometimes there are two girls, one at either end of the line.[2] When they are ready the girls swing their victim to and fro, singing the while.

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Songs

I

Joyo karmata, joyo roy!
Luhur itān mati luhur bāra āyo,

Swing Karmata swing!
We thought it was a *bami* fish,
But it's not a *bami* fish.

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[1] A similar game is known in the Trobriand Islands.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] A similar game has been recorded in British New Guinea, and is there called Bidobido. 'Two rows of boys and girls face each other and opposite couples lock hands in sedan-chair fashion. A small boy projects himself prone upon the lane of hands at one end of the row and is tossed along it to the other end and as he passes each couple they run to the fore-end of the avenue and take up position as before thus making an endless lane.'—R. F. Barton, 'Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 266.

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Sipa ilān mati sipa bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *chipa* fish, But it's not a *chipa* fish.
Kotri ilān mati kotri bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *kotri* fish, But it's not a *kotri* fish.
Tengri ilān mati tengri bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *tengri* fish, But it's not a *tengri* fish.
Madum ilān mati mādum bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *madum* fish, But it's not a *madum* fish.
Joyo karmata joyo roy.	Swing Karmata swing.

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2

Kākor mācha men jhulna ho dai?	In whose *mācha* is the swing, mother?
Sājen ki mācha men jhulna ho dai.	The swing is in Sajen's *mācha*, mother.
Upar le aise nawa jogi ho dai;	A new beggar has come from above;
Suliyāro la legise nāwa jogi ho dai.	He has taken away the Suliaro.
Suliyāro hanse se much-much ho dai.	Suliaro is laughing *much-much*.
Sājen dekhe se mit-mit ho dai.	Sajen is peeping *mit-mit*, mother.

3

Bor dādāl ukār ungiwāl?	Who is swinging in the swing?
Kalamsai dādāl ukār ungiwāl.	It is Kalamsai swinging in the swing.
Adu badu bai ukār uhāna?	Which girl is pushing the swing?
Manjāro bai ukār uhāna.	Manjaro is pushing the swing.
Uhma rāni uhma nana arika.	Don't swing too hard, Rani, or I shall fall.
Arwi rāja arwi nana yetka.	You won't fall, Raja, for I am here to catch you.

Mahamandal Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

Boys and girls form themselves into a great *mahamandal* snake. Each grasps with both hands the buttocks of the one in front, and the line moves forward with a peculiar stamping movement. The head does not try to catch the tail; it simply imitates a snake, swinging round and round in a very serpentine manner. At last the line ties itself up by threading through itself again and again till all the children are knotted into a compact and helpless group.[1]

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Nun-nurial Karsana

This is a variety of the above game which I saw at Palli-Barkot and danced by the Tarbaili children. They wind and unwind themselves in the same way, but in the middle they squat down and walk over one another. At the beginning too the head of the line does not tie them up, but weaves his line through the main line, in and out under the uplifted arms. Here the name of

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[1] This is like a Trobriand game, in which 'the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot.... It is then unrolled.'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

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the game is taken from the Nun-nurial bird, which runs hither and thither in search of grasshoppers and grubs.

Chik-dondi Karsana[1]

This is similar to the preceding game. A long line of as many as forty boys and girls stand with arms extended, catching each other by the hand. Sometimes boys and girls are mixed; more properly the girls are at one end of the line and the boys at the other. Girls sing, '*Silori silori tande masak lo*' and the boys answer '*Kinari kinari tande masak lo*'. To which the girls reply, '*Hat ke geli mund ke geli jolinta joil singri masli non purgi haon ta haon ta*'. As they sing, the head of the line swings round and, bending down, burrows under the upraised arms of those next to him; he goes round again to those next but one, and so on, until several circles are rotating at once and the great line is gradually wound up. Then very rapidly they unwind themselves and soon are standing in line again. Now the opposite end begins, and they repeat the process until they are tired.

VIII. ROUND GAMES

We may now consider those games in which the children chase each other and run in and out of circles. These too are mainly important as exercise, to train the boys and girls in alertness, lightness of foot and the capacity to seize an opportunity.

Watia Karsana (Plate CXXIX)

Boys and girls sit in a big circle. A boy takes a roll of cloth or bit of paddy rope (*watia*) in his hand and runs round and round until he drops it behind someone. That boy or girl must jump up and catch the first boy before he can get round the circle into the safety of the place that has just been vacated.

A variety of this under the same name is played in Tarbaili. Two lines of boys and girls are formed facing each other at some distance. They throw a roll of cloth to one another. Anyone who misses the catch becomes the prisoner of the other side. So they continue until all are gathered on one side.

Giri Giri Karsana[2]

A number of girls sit in a circle. One girl bends down in front of them and several hit her on the back. She jumps up and chases them round the circle. Any she can touch must go and sit inside. They continue till she has caught them all.

Ganda Karsana

Boys and girls sit down in a big circle. They have to get up one by one. The first boy or girl whose knees crack while rising is 'out' and is called the Ganda, or untouchable. Sufficient children sit down to make the circle, and the rest run round and round outside; the Ganda goes into the circle and dashes out to catch as many as he can. Anyone he touches must go into the circle, and when all are caught the game is over. As they run round they sing:

Ek cowrie de re Gãnde, nãk me orain de.
Give me a cowrie, Ganda, and I'll wear it in my nose.

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[1] *Chik-dondi* is the stick for applying bird-lime.

[2] When you waggle your finger in someone's palm, it is *giri giri*.

GAMES

Pot Karsana

The Pot Karsana is very similar to the above. Some of the children make a circle; half the others go inside and the other half run round outside. They pull each other in and out of the circle singing *Pot pot pot*. 933x
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Pairi Karsana

A number of children sit down in a circle. The space between each child is regarded as a door. Others go round and round in line and have to cross into the middle of the circle by each door in turn. Once the leader of the line has succeeded in jumping over, the rest may follow him. If the sitting children manage to catch the leader by his ankle, as he jumps over, he is caught. It is a 'foul' if more than one tries to jump over at the same time.

A variety of this is called Usta Gundur Karsana.[1] Boys holding hands squat in a circle on the ground. Others run round clapping their hands and singing '*Usta gundur ta tin pe kor wark wark*'. 'Run round and jump. Get some parched rice and eat it.' The aim is to jump into the circle without being touched by the 'wall'. If one boy manages to get in, it means the gate is open, and they all go in and dance inside. Now they have to try to jump out.

Purar Karsana[2] (*Plate CXXIII*)

Girls stand in a ring holding each other's hands. A similar but smaller ring stands inside. The outer ring jumps over the inner ring and gets inside. Then that ring jumps inside again and so they go on over and over each other.

Song

Tuy chithal ?	Are you a little [pigeon]?
Ki mai mithal ?	Or am I a pretty girl?
Ghâghara ke pâni	The water of a pot
Tabak tor.	Splashes out when it is shaken.

[539]

A *mithal* girl is a smart pretty child who always keeps herself well dolled-up.

I saw almost the same game under the name of Kinaring Karsana at Kuntpadar. A double ring of girls hold hands. The inner ring bend down and the outer ring walk inwards over them. Then that ring bends down and the original inner ring walks over them. They turn and move outwards in the same way. They sing *Kinâri kinâri dondi maskelo*.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS GAMES

There are a number of games which do not fall readily into any classification. I give some of them here.

Nana Darbena Karsana (*Plate CXXII*)

Girls stand in a circle facing inwards. They jump up and down, clapping their hands above their heads. Suddenly they turn outwards and go on jumping up and down and clapping their hands.

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[1] *Usta gundur* is a small partridge.

[2] *Purar* is a wood-pigeon.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

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Nana darbena!
What is your clan, girl?
Whose daughter are you?
I want to laugh with you.
You are of the Naitami clan;
You are a Naitami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Kuhrami clan;
You are a Kuhrami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Poyami clan;
You are a Poyami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
What is your clan, girl?
If I go to a village, I will bring a boy and will laugh with him.
If I go to the field, I will bring a horse and will laugh with it.
If I go to the market, I will bring a girl and laugh with her.
Nana darbena!

Buchi Karsana

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This, which means literally 'the game of the girl with a broken ear', is played by girls standing together in a close circle. They begin to sing a little song with no particular meaning and all bend forward touching their ankles. At each line of the song they raise themselves a little touching first the knees, then the waist, the breast, the shoulders until the hands are held high above the head.

Song

[539]

Dāda gelose gaon gelose buchi buchi!	Brother has gone to his village, *buchi buchi!*
Dāda cho thaili me arrigunda arrigunda;	In his purse is sweet tobacco;
Tindkiney tinwiney arrigunda arrigunda?	Will he eat the sweet tobacco?

The word *buchi*, which means a broken ear, is sometimes used as a girl's name. To tear the ear-aperture (used for ornaments) is regarded by the Muria, as by people elsewhere, as a social disaster, but here the expression seems to have no connexion either with the song or the game.

Mundi Karsana

A ring of girls stand very close together. Every girl with her left hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's right hand until there is an upper ring formed. Then each with her right hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's left hand until a lower ring is formed. They then raise and lower the two rings, singing with a quick jerky rhythm.

GAMES

Song

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Eh ah mundi!	One one ring!
Duy duy mundi!	Two two rings!
Ohar mundi!	His ring!
Mundi lori!	Rings in a circle!
Pasparela de hodo māli lori de hodo māli lori!	Put the *pasparela* shrubs in a circle!

Panang-doking (Frog and Lizard) Karsana

This game is also known as Doke and Nagil-māting (Root-digging). I have also seen it played by Gond and Pardhan in the Central Provinces. Three boys or girls stand back to back on one leg. They link their legs together in order to support themselves and then hop round in a circle clapping their hands and singing various short catches, of which one is *Nagil-mating kutuh kutuh*, or 'We dig for roots and eat them'. And another is

Peki tinung pānang doking māt tinom latha.	The girls ate lizards and we ate frogs.
Pekor tinung pānang doking māt tinom beli.	The boys ate lizards and we ate sweets.

Jatia (Grindstone) Karsana (Plate CXXVII)

Four boys lie down feet to feet like a star. Their feet are tied together with someone's turban. Bigger boys catch them by the arms and raising them up go round and round in a circle.[1]

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Tedapotur Karsana

Boys lie down in a long straight line, each extending his right hand above his head to catch hold of his predecessor's loin-cloth. The boy at the end gets up and walks straddled down the line dragging the boys up with him till all are standing now with their arms between their legs clutching their neighbour's loin-cloths. Then the leader reverses the process and walks back till all are lying on the ground again. *Tedapotur* may mean 'stitching a leaf-basket' and the game may be supposed to represent this.

Song

Mother-in-law 's like a *potor* leaf.
Husband's elder brother 's like the central beam of the house. [539]
Husband's younger brother 's like the verandah pole.
Father-in-law 's like a teak leaf.

In this song the symbols are probably sexual. The mother-in-law is like the leaf of the *rām-dātun* (or *potor*) tree whose twigs are usually used for cleaning teeth. The two brothers of the husband have virile organs, the elder's like the thick house-beam, the younger's pleasant and penetrating, as the slender pole that supports the verandah. Father-in-law is useless as the leaf of a teak tree.

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[1] Haddon recorded a similar game in British New Guinea. Four boys lie at full length forming a cross: a small boy crouches at their feet. Other boys lift them up and go round so that 'the whole contrivance revolves like a four-spoked wheel'.—Haddon, op. cit., p. 290.

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Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

[539]

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pāo parilo pulti pāo parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawā garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chānwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rāja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo !	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumār kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki ki ri kir.	*Ki ki ri kir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. COCK-FIGHTING

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Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

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[1] A similar game is known as *Dhapa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 285. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

reared and trained to fight. It is said that in the good old days, the fights 541
used to be between two men, and the spectators bet on the result. Cock- 525
fighting came in when this exciting custom was forbidden. Large meetings

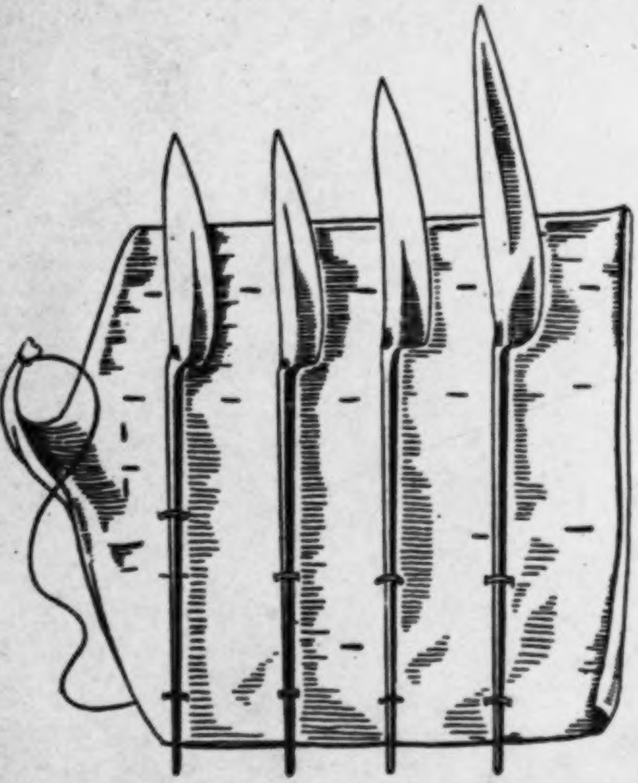

FIG. 146. Set of cock-fighting knives in cloth bag
Length of longest knife 5"

are held at the end of most of the bazaars late in the afternoon. Special meetings are also called in the larger Muria villages, both regularly and on

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sharpen the natural spurs with a knife. 'A real good fight' he says 'may last for several hours.' This, and several other details of Thurston's description, seem to me a little doubtful. Thurston adds that the sport was popular in South Canara among the Bant, but since it often led to quarrels was discouraged by the police.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 569ff. I have never seen it in the Central Provinces, though I have watched maina-fighting in Sarangarh State. Other references to cock-fighting will be found in T. R. Padmanabhachari, 'Games, Sports and Pastimes in Prehistoric India', *Man in India*, Vol. XXI, p. 144; D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V, p. 201; J. Sarkar, 'Assam and the Ahoms in 1660', *JBORS*, Vol. I, p. 186; and in some of the standard monographs on individual tribes.

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special occasions such as a gathering of the pargana panchayat. In this part the Muria are enthusiastic over the sport and not inconsiderable sums of money pass to and fro in the bets which inevitably accompany a fight. To the gentle Muria the attraction of cock-fighting is not (as it is to the more bloodthirsty Bison-horn Maria) the excitement of blood and battle, but the pleasure of betting. The cock that loses also becomes the property of the winner.

When the company has gathered in the shade of a great grove of trees, the cocks—which have been brought to the place carefully covered—are measured against each other so that in no fight will they be too unfairly matched. The spur-men, who are Muria specially trained in the business, go aside to tie the spurs to the cocks' feet. These spurs are sharp knife-blades about 3" long and slightly curved, made by the Muria Lohar of locally smelted iron, and are kept in little bamboo cases or rolled up in a cloth hold-all.

The spur-man attaches the blades to the cock's feet, spits on the string and binds it round and round until the blades are firmly fixed at exactly the right height and angle. He then removes dirt from his ears, mixes some with the dust from his left foot with a little spittle and rubs the mess on the blades saying, 'O Mahapurub, O the Departed of my house, you know my truth and goodness. It is for you to give this cock victory'. He removes a feather from the cock's tail, cuts it in two with the blade attached to its leg, spits on it and throws it away. If the cock is victorious, the spur-man receives a leg of its defeated adversary.

The owners now pick up their birds and stand facing each other in the middle of a clearing surrounded by an excited crowd of spectators. They hold the cocks out, make them peck at each other and when they are aroused put them on the ground. The birds usually go to the attack at once, and the fight only lasts a short time. The blades are very deadly and I have frequently seen both cocks fall dead after thirty seconds' combat. Once a cock turns away from its adversary, it is considered defeated.

After a victory, the owner of the cock should make an offering of liquor to the Departed. At Binjhli he was expected to give a coconut to the Village Mother. At Ulera, the Muria said that when they put the cocks into battle they remembered the Departed.

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Plate CXXI

Festival dancing, with big dhol drums, at Phunder

Festival dancing, with small drums, at Phunda

[p. 582 (N)]

Plate CXXII

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Durpa
Dandi

Movements in the Nana Durbena dance at Aler

[p. 582(8)]

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

OTHER RECREATIONS

I. Muria Humour

522 THE humour of the Muria is probably more fully developed than that of any other tribe in Bastar or the Central Provinces; the ghotul is a natural school of wit; the constant association of young people forces them to devise many forms of entertainment. The first and most elementary expression of Muria humour is plain buffoonery. They love throwing dirty water at each other, sprinkling people with red ants, creeping up behind someone and clasping muddy hands round his face. In Nayanar, the chelik had bamboo squirts (Fig. 21) with which they projected streams of water at the motiari. At a marriage, old men and women get great fun out of pouring haldi-water over the buttocks of their relatives as they bend down to greet the bridal pair. They enjoy poking each other's genitals and catching hold of them, and if anyone dances naked, especially if this is in front of forbidden relatives, they laugh till they can hardly stand. The reader will note that here it is the social rather than the sexual aspect of the ribaldry that appeals; it is the notion of doing something unusual and improper before people in whose presence the strictest decorum is usually practised. Jokes about incest are funny because it is almost unknown in Muria society; it is possible to be humorous about adultery simply because it is so rare. The obscene jokes of a Muria marriage do not by any means imply a general standard of obscenity; indeed they suggest the opposite. It is in the most rigidly correct middle classes of English society that the vulgar postcard has its widest circulation, for it is the sense of contrast and incongruity that is amusing. In this connexion George Orwell has recently drawn attention to the difference between obscenity and immorality. The obscene is based on the implication that 'marriage is something profoundly exciting and important, the biggest event in the average human being's life. So also with jokes about nagging wives and tyrannous mothers-in-law. They do at least imply a stable society in which marriage is indissoluble and family loyalty taken for granted...A dirty joke is not, of course, a serious attack upon morality, but it is a sort of mental rebellion, a momentary wish that things were otherwise.'[1] So, in this sense Muria jokes are obscene, but they are not immoral.

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292 The Muria get a great deal of fun out of dressing up. At weddings, especially at the critical moment of the Lagir, many people—both young and old—appear in fantastic array. One man performs as a giant; another has an enormous rope penis; a third is covered with ash and goes about imitating the Siraha-mediums. In Malakot the villagers were highly amused at the antics of an old man dressed in a bear-skin who was led about by his keeper, himself swathed from head to foot in paddy-rope. The village headman, ordinarily the soberest of beings, appeared riding a hobby-horse and flourishing an umbrella. At Sidhawand there was a 'sadhu' with a long tail and an ash-covered fisherman who burlesqued Muria fishing methods. Masks are sometimes worn, especially during the Pus Kolang and Cherta expeditions. In Kachora two boys wearing gourd masks played at man and wife, the wife causing great mirth by a pair of artificial breasts. In Phulpar a chelik wore an artificial beard of squirrel's hair which he combed before a mirror. In

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[1] G. Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', *Horizon*, Vol. IV (1941), pp. 155ff.

522 292 Gorma, the Muria Atpariha dressed up as a straw man, with a whitened face and beard of bear's fur. He carried about an enormous bow and a wooden spade as arrow. Even an old solar topi is thought amusing—when it is on a chelik's head. The desire to create a sharp dramatic contrast prompted a Muria at Masora to dance with a dog in his arms (Plate CXLIII).

522 But beside a delight in sudden contrasts, the Muria have a special attraction to the grotesque. In one story a girl with a huge umbilical stump buries herself in the bed of a river, but the stump sticks up and a bullock cart is caught on it. The first motiari had a vagina so large that a wild boar could roll about in it. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon. In a song, a boy has a penis as long as a cucumber and testicles as fat as pumpkins.

In Gorma I saw an extraordinary dance, when the performer, distorting his face and body, pranced about the ghotul like an obscene bird. With his hand he poked his bottom, privates, chest and head, smelt his supposedly soiled and stinking fingers, then pushed them in the faces of the onlookers. It was done so well that you forgot the indecency in a sort of horror as at some perverted creation of the mind. In the same category are the 'panthers' or 'lizards' that so often appear at a dance or wedding. A boy covers himself with a blanket, and with an ingenious arrangement of twigs makes himself a head and beak which opens and shuts. He then crawls about in what I can only call an abominable manner which never fails to give a thrill of fear.

More purely humorous was a great bird made at Phauda. A chelik lay on the ground with his hands stretched out before him. The others covered his body with a blanket and his hands with cloth. They decorated the cloth-covered hands with ornaments, gave them a beak and ears, and produced a grotesque bird. Then the boy by moving his hands made the bird peck about very divertingly (Plate CXLVII).

If we turn to verbal wit we find a similar tendency. In the songs are references to moustached peacocks[1] and tusked hares.

[539] On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
Its teeth are as long as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustache is like jungle grass, chelik.
Its hairs like bamboo shavings, chelik.

In the Ghotul Pata there are many such diverting descriptions. How excellent, for example, is the account of the Kotwar who is fed on gruel twelve years old and full of frogs and lizards[2]

[539] His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pitos pitos*.

The descriptions of the chelik and motiari at Siri Somni's marriage and of the treatment given to Bai Dursal Rani by the Manjhi[3] are funny even to Western ears.

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[1] Compare the Uraon poem:

The cobra comes
With his hood raised
Asking alms.
The heron comes
With his neck straight
Twirling his moustaches. (Archer, op. cit., p. 122.)

[2] The antics of the village Kotwar are a favourite theme of the Gond and Pardhan story-teller in the Central Provinces. See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 88f., 206f., and Elwin and Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 372ff.

[3] See p. 608.

OTHER RECREATIONS

II. A Test of Wit

The posing of riddles is a fairly popular form of amusement in the ghotul. It sharpens the wits and is often very amusing, the sharp and unexpected contrasts between description and meaning often surprising the listeners into a sudden burst of laughter. Many riddles have both a manifest and latent meaning, the latter usually sexual. Riddles illustrating various sociological points will be found throughout the book, but I will add another 150 here. 522 524

In Gondi, the riddles are usually in what may be called prose. Rhyme is very uncommon and even assonance and punning are rare. The following are hardly typical:

Utu tutu bhui la tutu.
The horn comes out of the ground.
A bamboo shoot.

Uding uding inta, ḍāy ḍāy inta.
Say sit sit and say go go.
Sand in which you get stuck.

Porro kāre, adi mend.
Thrashing-floor above, its pole below.
An umbrella.

Konda udinta kāsra witinta.
The bullock sits, the tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

The usual Gondi riddle has no special form.

Undi urpādun nur nei hashintāng.
A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
The rafter of a house.

Tāmur irwura lohku jotāy manta, mati warro warrona lole horiyor.
The brothers live together, but never enter each other's house.
A pair of shoes.

It is in the Halbi riddles, which are now almost as common as those in the original Gondi, that we find rhyme and assonance. The Halbi riddle is spoken very fast with an emphasis on a central word.

Suklo rukh thai hare;
Burga bhālu hai hare.
The dry tree says *thai;*
The old bear says *hai.*
A gun.

Kurlu dongri mārlu jhāti;
Ek thoni pachās pāti.
Cut shrubs on the hill of kurlu trees;
There are fifty rafters on one pole.
An umbrella.

Ek gerkcho morkigai,
Bāra gerkcho pānikhai.
The cow with the broken horn from one house drinks the water of twelve houses.
A fish-hook.

522 *Chiringta bāja;*
524 *Natrāl pāga.*
It makes a noise like a drum;
It has a red turban.
A sarus crane.

Alliteration is also used.

Phulte phulese,
Jharte jharese.
Flower blossoms
And drops soon.
A bazaar.

Some riddles end with a taunt or challenge, a device which is generally only used when an extra line is needed to complete the rhyme.

Jhil mili tarai
Rai ratan bāri.
Ye dhandha he nijānbe,
Baile cho nāk he kāti.

The star sparkles
The fence is beautiful.
If you don't answer this riddle,
Your wife's nose will be cut off.
A mirror.

Karkas pāna rupas dheti
Dhandha ko nahi jānbe ghasnin ke beti.
Rough leaves, silver stem.
If you don't know this riddle,
You're a Ghasnin's daughter.
Sugar-cane.

There's a wall round the lake.
If you can't answer this, you'll be my bond-servant.
A mirror.

The stick is straight,
At the top are bells.
If you don't know what this is,
An ant will bite your bottom.
Male genitalia.

A few rather curious riddles take the form of imaginary conversations. A thorn addresses a man about to step on it. 'I see you, but you don't see me.' A householder speaks to a leaf blown in by the wind. 'Where have you come from, old chap, making your camp on my doorstep?' A flooded river as it rushes on speaks to the reeds growing in its bed, 'You stay where you are; I am going to Ratanpur'.

The riddles posed in the ghotul may not all be of Muria origin, but at least the Muria can enjoy them and see their point. Even if a man cannot make that kind of joke himself, he may claim to have some sense of humour if he enjoys reading Thurber. Many of the descriptions set out in riddle form are really witty and amusing even to the sophisticated Western mind. The riddles too gain their effect from bizarre contrasts. An axe is described as 'a roasted pig jumping from tree to tree'. Anyone who has seen a Muria roasting a pig, holding the headless creature over the fire, will appreciate the

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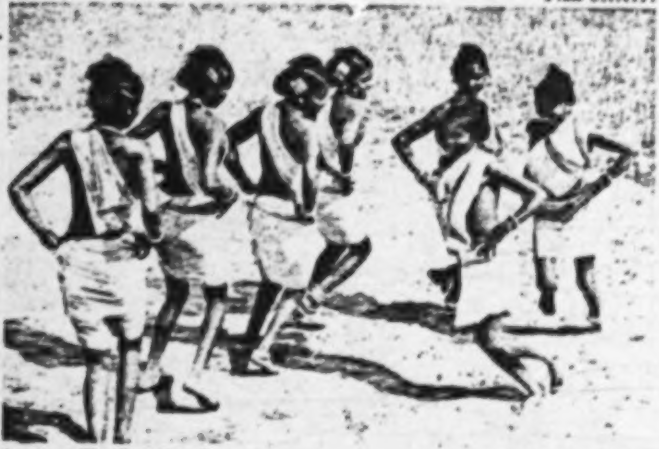
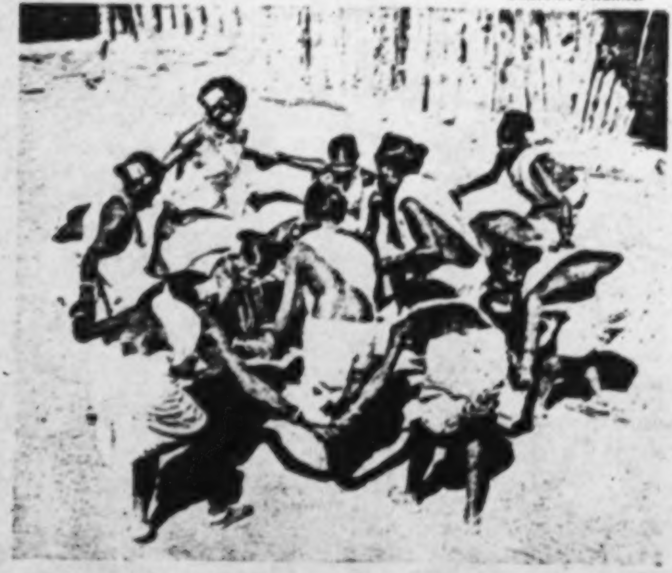
Plate CXXIII



ABOVE: The Guguring Gus dance at Alor

BELOW: Purar Karsana, a ring dance at Phunder



[p.586(A)]

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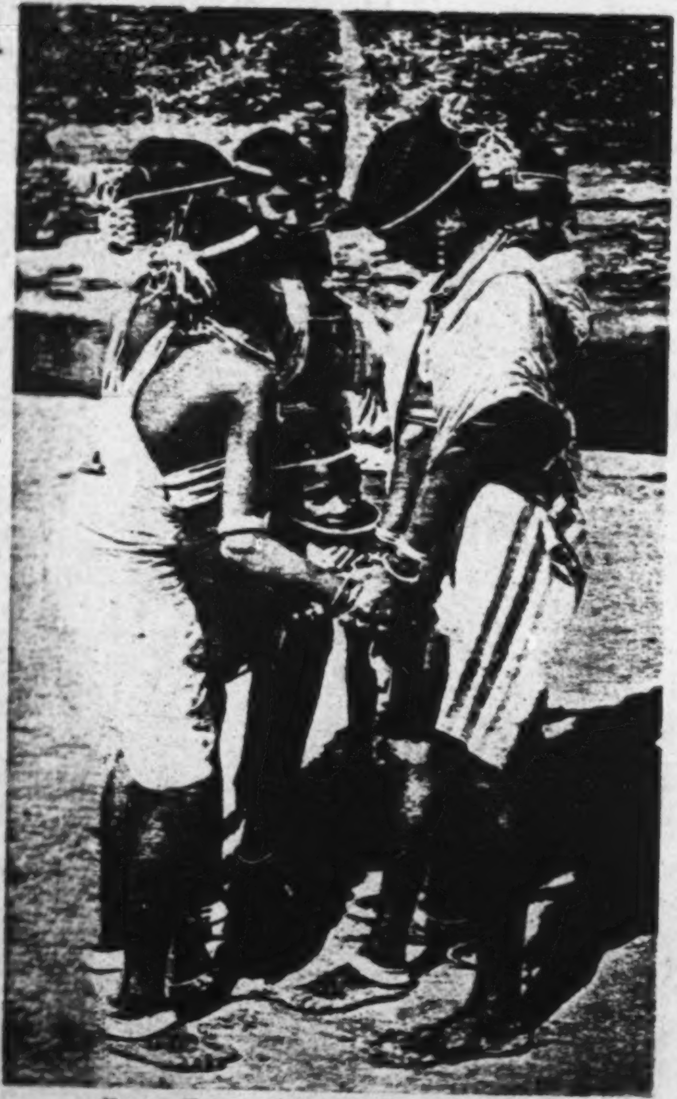
Plate CXXIV



Karmata Karsana: Swinging-the-Baby, at Temrugaon

[p. 586 (R)]

522 wit of that; it is even better than the Uraon riddle on the same theme—'A
524 parrot playing on the dry stump of a tree'.[1] Another pig riddle is about a needle and thread which is described as 'a little pig with a cord in its bottom' instead of where the pig's cord ought to be, in its nose.

And what an admirable description of palm wine! 'Outside how quiet—but in the belly how it thunders!' The stomach is always amusing; as with us there is the connotation of something gross and amiable, the fat man keen on his food. A drum is 'a fly buzzing in an elephant's belly'—stressing the contrast of the huge belly and the little fly. A winnowing-fan is the 'man with buttocks in front and stomach behind'—the same kind of absurdity as when a man puts on his trousers back to front.

An oil-press is 'the hunchback bear that pisses all round'. A gun is riddled thus: 'Tap the dry tree and the old bear says *Hai*.' This seems to me amusing in a quiet and bucolic way, but—to make one more comparison with the Uraon riddles—their description of a gun as 'a ghost speaking from a dry piece of wood'[2] is uncanny and chills the heart. It probably has more effect on a European reader: he remembers a thousand guns and the ghosts that they have made.

There is an excellent description of a letter:

A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy:
Where are you off to, pigeon?

Some other witty riddles are these:

The basket broke and out came the tiger.—*A pig excreting.*
Always turns up punctually to work.—*The sun.*
A black cow with a thousand feet jumps onto the Raja's food.—*A fly.*

You can almost see those dirty feet landing in the middle of the plate, scattering the royal food across the table, the face of the indignant Raja.

Two riddles expose the limitations of the human frame: 'You can see the distant hill, but not the one on top of you.' That is your own head. And 'your own back' is the answer to 'You can see all the world save one little plot of land'.

Two smutty jokes: 'The creature has a penis above and a vagina below.' *The backside of a cow.* 'He has his penis in his mouth.' *A sahib smoking a cigar.* These with their vague half-remembered associations to Havelock Ellis are probably more amusing to a European than to a Muria.

522 Really witty smut is not very common; I have been through many Paske Pata, the marriage songs which hurl rhythmic abuse at all the relations of the bridal pair, but I have found nothing that seems funny to me. Yet it obviously seems funny to the Muria, for at each new obscenity they shout with triumphant laughter. Why should it be so amusing to say 'I'll bed your sister', 'I'll copulate with your mother', 'I'll carry off my uncle's daughter'? The reason again is not sexual, but social; it is due to the absorbed attention which all Muria give to family relationships. You can always raise a laugh from a Muria audience by a reference to the Table of Affinity.

As we see elsewhere, certain relations stand in a *hassi ki nāt*, a joking relation, to one another. The time-honoured jokes are brought out again and again and always get a good hand. A man says to his *bhācka*: 'Why not come and live on us? You can't get a living in your own house. Then I'll be able to carry off your daughter, I've always wanted to marry her.' A chelik laughs at his *māma*, mother's brother. 'I'm going to have your daughter', he says.

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[1] Archer, op. cit., p. 180.

[2] Ibid., p. 180.

522 'Well', says his uncle. 'She *is* being kept for you.' 'No, I want a larger choice of girls. But I'll just carry her off for a few days.' And two samdhi joke with each other. 'I know you sleep every night with your sister', says one. 'Yes, and we all know whom *you* sleep with.' And so on interminably.

x883 In the ghotul, children tease each other but they are not allowed to go too far. A chelik who repeats a joke until it becomes cruel is fined. At a motiari's
522 first menstruation, everybody is pleased and amused. 'Today the embankment of the field is broken.' 'We'd better call a lot of coolies to mend the leaking tank.' When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period of seclusion, the boys say, 'So the coolies have stopped the hole in the field. Don't let anyone make a new hole tonight'.

In the Binjhli ghotul one day the Silo, an older girl, was forcibly 'married' to the smallest boy there—this is a ghotul in which formal 'marriages' are not allowed, so the game had the double value of incongruity both in age and custom. The children performed all the marriage ceremonies, pretended to drink a lot of liquor, imitated the antics of their drunken elders, and finally dragged the pair off to bed together. But the little boy ran away. Then they pretended that a child was born, and a bundle was handed round the ghotul, the boys giving it their 'breasts' to suck. At last the little 'father' had to take it, but he threw it away crying, 'It doesn't look like me; she's been going to other boys'.

When older men come to the ghotul, there is a lot of coarse jesting about their relations with their wives. I remember the headman of Kuntpadar who is almost completely bald had himself massaged by the Belosa and said, 'How is she going to pull her comb through my few hairs' and 'If my old woman were to see me now, I wonder what she'd say. It's a good rule that wives mustn't come to the ghotul'.

x883 A boy or girl with any deformity is laughed at and is given a nickname which will remind him of it. Some of these names are themselves witty—
522 Dhol, fat as a drum; Banga, who was a stupid baby; Pota with a big stomach;
551 Salaidu who never does what he is told but always something else; Cholu who never stops talking, and Marin—who is like a Maria, 'never takes any notice of anyone and when you want to beat him gets out his bow and arrows'. A boy at Binjhli, of whom it is said that he cannot see a motiari without saying something to make her laugh, is called Jhola. In the same ghotul a big overgrown fellow was ragged mercilessly. He was *dokara* (old man) by day and *bokara* (goat) at night. 'All the land of the ghotul has been broken up by his great ploughshare.'

x Shamrao Hivale heard a chelik and motiari talking to each other in the
883 ghotul; each sentence sent them into fits of laughter. 'What have you got?'
522 said the boy. 'No, tell me first what you've got.' 'Well, I've one root and two onions.' 'And I', said the girl, 'have two sweet mangoes and a basket for your root.' 'Yes, but what am I to do with the onions?' 'They can stay out in the compound.' 'But at least put the root in your basket.'

Straightforward sexual jokes, with no social reference, about copulation and the private parts are common enough. For the Baihar Karsana (Mad Game), at Kanhargaon, boys dress up as a lunatic with his wife and child. He has a huge penis, 'she' grotesque breasts. Every time he touches them, he gets burnt; he tries to pull out her pubic hairs, and gets burnt again. The wife gives birth to a child, a cloth doll, the husband suckles it—but I need not particularize the endless buffoonery. The copulation of animals may be imitated; this is done even in the public—and very sacred—Pus Kolang dances. Excretory jokes are rare, I think, though boys laugh at girls if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it. 883x 522

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport. [776]

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him. 522 538

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

> There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him. 522 539
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> Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.
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> When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

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man. 'Go to your father-in-law's house', he said, 'as a servant. I will give you this charm, that whatever you say will happen.' So the boy went and took a job as servant. He found the barber's son living there in his stead, wearing his ornaments and dressed in his clothes. That night the barber's son went in to the father-in-law's daughter. The Raja's son outside the door exclaimed, 'As they are, let them be; without my order let them not separate'.

So there they were, stuck together and all night they struggled to get free. In the morning the members of the family sent their servant, the Raja's son, for a midwife to cut the unhappy pair apart.

Now as the Raja's son was bringing the midwife to the house, they had to cross a flooded river and both of them stripped themselves naked. The Raja's son said, 'Put your clothes on your head, hold them there with your two hands and so cross the river'. As the woman approached the opposite bank, the boy said, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. So the midwife came naked, holding her hands to her head, and weeping and, of course, she could do nothing.

So then they sent the Raja's son to fetch a magician. As they were coming along together, the magician went to relieve himself but there was no water near at hand. But there was a dead bullock's head with two horns and he wiped himself on it. As he was doing so, the Raja's son exclaimed, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. And so the magician came to the house with the bullock's head and its horns sticking to his bottom. When he saw him, the father-in-law was so frightened that he said, 'Whoever can solve this trouble, shall have my daughter and all my money'. Then the Raja's son told him what had happened and his father-in-law said, 'If you can make all well again, I will believe you, and you shall have my daughter'. At this the Raja's son removed his charms and the horns dropped from the magician's bottom, the woman covered her vagina with her hands, and the girl released the barber's son from his captivity.

Then the father-in-law killed that barber's son and married the Raja's son to his daughter.

From that day we never use barbers to cut our hair. We never use water when we relieve ourselves. If the omens are wrong we never go to betroth a girl, and we think it no fault if the unmarried sleep together.[1]

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[1] In a Bengali tale, which we probably possess in a somewhat bowdlerized version, the stick of a cowherd gets stuck to his hand, the winnowing-basket of a maid servant gets stuck to her hand, a platter sticks to the hand of a Rani, and a Raja and his courtiers get stuck to their seats and have to be sewn off.—S. C. Mitra, 'A Bengali Cumulative Folk-tale of the Old Dame Lousy Type' in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, July 1922. Other parallels may be found in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 212ff., where the Prince makes the impostor's mouth stick to his hookah and the priest's wife stick to his shoulders as he carries her across a stream, and in A. Grignard, *Hahn's Oraon Folk-lore* (Patna, 1931), pp. 46ff., where the Prince declares, 'If this fellow be her god-given bridegroom, you stools stick to the seats of these sorcerers' and of course they do. I recorded yet another version in a Juang village in Pal Lahara State. In this a goatherd who suffers from impotence has the compensatory power of sticking things together. He attaches a girl's buttocks to a rock while she is bathing and a pot to an old man's behind. There is a ribald scene where a bride and bridegroom are fixed together and the whole family tries to pull them apart. An inquisitive Brahmin bends over the place of conjunction and gets his moustache caught there. These stories are of the same order as the Toda-Kota motif of the dog becoming stuck in copulation.—M. B. Emeneau, 'Some Origin Stories', *JAOS*, Vol. LXIII, p. 163.

OTHER RECREATIONS

III. RIDDLES

1. In the middle of the field they are measuring salt.
Rats.

2. A small boy brings out the salt to be measured.
Rat digging a hole.

3. You stay where you are, swaying to and fro:
I am going to Ratanpur.
A flooded river speaks to reeds growing in its bed.

4. I will say to my brother, 'Don't eat, don't eat'.
Fishing-hook.

5. The wind shakes it *burur burur:* why is it not fit for eating? You are looking at the jungle; why don't you eat it?
Sambhar and kamhar fruit (which sambhar do not eat).

6. Eight legs, nine knees, it decorates the wall, the old dried-up headman.
Spider.

7. The dock-tailed one has twenty-two cubs.
Spider.

8. In the dry tree the flower blossoms: it is beautiful in the world.
Cloth.

9. The belly behind, the back before.
Calves of the legs.

10. Malan bites the buttocks of Salan.
Marking-nut seed and fruit (which sticks on at the end).

11. The *chirota* fruit is not to be plucked;
The spotted bullock is not to be tethered;
The green stick is not to be lifted.
Sun, tiger, snake.

12. The Jamdar hides in the leaves;
The Kamdar hides in the clods,
There is a *ruckhal* sound in the grain-bin.
Hare, field-rat, mouse.

13. It jumps *cha cha*; it is naked in spite of its clothes; it is the ants' priest; it is the Gunia of the forest.
Frog, spider, snake, eni bird.

14. Inside flesh, outside bones.
Coconut.

15. There's one pot inside another: the son is whiter than the father.
Coconut.

16. The pig is three years old, but it has only a little bit of flesh.
Gongi and shell.

17. The white cock's organ is bent.
Gongi shell.

18. The small boy jumps along, repairing as he goes, the bank of the field.
Needle.

19. It drinks water on the rock and jumps over the tree.
Axe.

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20. You are going taking me with you.
A man and his shadow.

21. Who is the priest of the Bastar soil?
The potter.

22. The piebald horse ate a thousand leaves.
A bamboo umbrella.

23. They built a palace without using water.
White-ants.

24. Four-score buffaloes go along a narrow road.
Ants in a line.

25. There is a black man in your house.
Ant.

26. Big eyes, sharp teeth.
Monkey and white-ants.

27. On the ground big teeth; in the sky big eyes.
White-ants and a vulture.

28. It drinks its gruel from a gourd; it hides among the bamboos.
A baby drinking milk and sleeping in a basket.

29. Chitkunj Mitkunj crosses twelve hills, but hides in a dry leaf.
Siari seed.

30. Sit, Bondki, sit. Why are you standing?
The wall of a house.

31. Many kosum flowers in one bunch.
Market.

32. In the field a snake is wriggling.
Cultivators using a rake.

33. On the bush are many yellow birds.
Chilli.

34. The small boy makes the king weep.
Chilli.

35. The smell of the marriage feast is hot.
Chilli.

36. A chip of a dry tree.
Finger-nail.

37. On the green tree is a dry piece of wood.
Finger-nail.

38. Going, coming, but no footprint.
A boat.

39. You can't throw away the seed, but you can throw away the bark.
Boat (from which bits are chipped off when it is made).

40. The deer goes to and fro without feet.
Boat.

41. The fist is full of seed, the house is full of beans.
Children.

42. An old woman digs up the ground.
Pig.

OTHER RECREATIONS

43. The basket broke and out came the tiger.
A pig excretes.

44. A Lamana woman goes along throwing parched rice on the path
A she-goat excretes.

45. The dish comes from a Raja's house; touch it and you swell.
Fire.

46. On the dry tree blossoms a flower.
Fire.

47. A small boy pulling hard puts on his dhoti.
A man winds rope into a grain-bin.

48. The sacrificed goat drinks water.
Hemp.

49. Lick quickly and fall down.
Broom.

50. Pick up the bundle and it talks.
Broom.

51. Nobody knows the noise of its beating *pat-pat*.
Eyebrow.

52. If anything is thrown in the two tanks, they overflow.
Eyes.

53. Even little fish can't get into this shining tank.
The eye.

54. A new plough, a new yoke, a new field yields a crow.
A new daughter-in-law.

55. It is hard to pick up, but you can throw it away with your left hand.
Ashes from the hearth.

56. A chelik uses up a whole cart-load of toilet-twigs.
The hearth.

57. At the time of yoking—one:
At time of loosing—two.
Toilet-twig used to clean the teeth, which usually splits after use. [575]

58. Five men are ploughing the fields and ten men are collecting the earth with a harrow.
A twig for cleaning the teeth. (Five men means five fingers and ten men means fingers of both the hands.)

59. The hornless bullock grows a horn.
Moon.

60. It always turns up punctually.
Sun.

61. Four are cold, four are hot, four are wet. The deer has twelve toes: each grazes by itself.
The year.

62. The black cock gathers it; the white cock spreads it out to dry.
Night and day.

63. In the stream sits a decorated bird.
Money in a string-bag.

64. The vulture eats the bullock, but can never finish it.
Sharpening-stone.

65. It is raining dum-dum; the tortoise goes to the bank.
Rain-hat.

66. The spotted monkey eats thirty-two score leaves.
Rain-hat.

67. The thrashing-floor is above, and its peg is below.
An umbrella.

68. This peacock has only one leg.
An umbrella.

69. The baby is born with seven coverings.
A bamboo-shoot.

70. The cowshed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get in.
Breasts that can never be properly covered with cloth.

71. The nose-string is above, the hawk below.
Mango and its stem.

72. Unmarried they beat her:
Married they let her be.
Pot.

73. Inside it goes down deep;
Above it rises high;
It is needed every year.
Thatching grass.

74. The long hen lays its eggs in a circle.
Dāng-kānda, a root.

75. Fruit, fruit, seedless fruit.
Eggs.

76. A cow bears seeds; the seeds bear children.
Hen's eggs.

77. The cow gave birth to a bone, and the bone to a calf.
A hen.

78. Fruit without root.
An egg.

79. The mother gave birth to a seed and the seed gave birth to a child.
An egg.

80. The orange now has flowers.
A chick hatched from an egg.

81. The tree has only two leaves.
Man and his ears.

82. Up stairs, down stairs, a fish in the middle.
The tongue.

83. Dead bullock goes ahead.
Cowhide rope of a plough.

84. A ploughshare falls from the hillside.
A lizard.

85. The white cock goes from house to house.
Curds being hawked from door to door.

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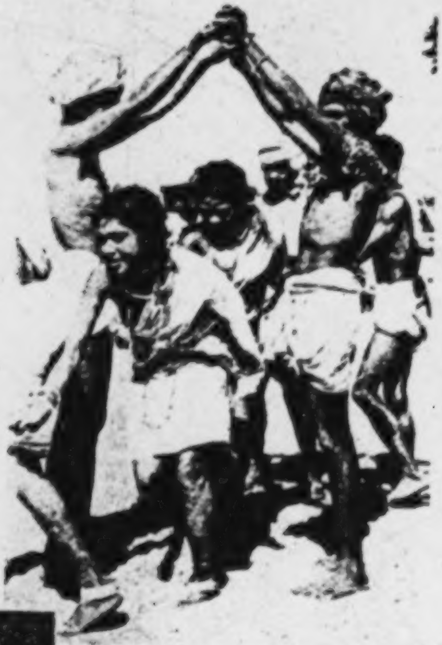

Donga Karsana:
Oranges and Lemons, at Koilibera

Plate CXXV

[p. 594(A)]

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The Salho of the Munjmeta ghotul

Plate CXXVI

The Jhaliyaro of the Karikhodra ghotul

[p.594(R)]

OTHER RECREATIONS

86. There's white water in the black pot. Queen Thamka is dancing there.
The pot in which curd is churned.

87. It comes when you call and goes back when you threaten it.
Gate.

88. Going it goes, coming it comes.
Door.

89. It takes its food without vegetables.
Wooden spade for digging earth.

90. Three brothers stand on one leg.
Leaf of the pharsa tree.

91. The sweetest thing in the world.
Sleep.

92. A bird goes along dragging a cart-load of grass behind.
A peacock.

93. The white bullock has a black halter.
Kosa-cocoon.

94. You fire the arrow with all your might, but it falls below your feet.
Urine.

95. The mother sits still and her child whirls round.
Earthen pot and gourd used to stir the jāwa-gruel.

96. Two are dry and four are slimy.
The horns and udders of a cow.

97. A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
Rafter of a house.

98. The two brothers live together but never enter each other's house.
Shoes.

99. You can hear the noise of the ring and see its mark on the road.
Cart-wheel.

100. This creeper has only one fruit, but inside that fruit there is a flower.
Lamp.

101. A little sparrow scattered its feathers about the whole house.
Lamp.

102. There is a fire in its mouth; its tail drinks water; we all love it, for it's like a queen.
Lamp.

103. It has a head but no heart. It walks but cannot speak.
A copper coin.

104. The flower is in the water but the fruit is in the tree.
Wild fig.

105. The black seed is sown in the white field.
Ink and paper.

106. A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy. Where are you off to, pigeon? To meet the king.
A letter in the post.

107. The bullock sits down and its tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

108. The tethering cord is long and many calves are tied to it.
Cucumbers on their stalk.

109. The ram cries when you touch its horn.
Grindstone.

110. The small drum has holes at either end.
Mahua flower.

111. The two brothers clean their teeth with one twig.
Two wheels and one axle.

112. There's no tree near the seed. If you eat it, it disappears.
Hailstone.

113. It cannot understand, but others understand; it is not a man, but it walks day and night.
A watch.

114. It grows in the sun and dies in the shade.
Sweat.

115. It shoots its arrow, but it has neither bow nor hands.
A porcupine.

116. Licks quickly and looks up.
A hoe.

117. It is life without bone, it is black but it's no young buffalo.
A leech.

118. All is burnt but the king's small piece of cloth.
A path.

119. Everything in the forest is burnt but the yogi's sack.
Date-palm grub.

120. The big creature has small eyes, ears like winnowing-fans and no wings.
Elephant.

121. A black cow has a thousand feet; it jumps on to the king's dinner.
A fly.

122. Daughter-in-law's name is Koelapati; mother-in-law's name is Tarro. It goes round the village making a noise.
Government and Kotwar.

123. A little pig has a cord in its bottom.
Needle and thread.

124. Whistle and the pole waves to and fro.
Tail of a dog.

125. The big forest has a little forest at one end.
A dog and its tail.

126. The vagina is underneath, the penis is above.
Tail of a cow.

127. In front, it cuts with a sickle.
In the middle, it fills a basket.
Behind, it sweeps with a broom.
A cow.

128. A little girl ties a lot of cloth round her waist.
Spinner's bobbin.

129. This house has no doors.
Kosa-cocoon.

130. If you give, I will give.
Johar greeting.

OTHER RECREATIONS

131. The plough has ten servants; each bullock has five. They catch the mangoes. They shut the little door; they fill the house with water.
Love-making and intercourse. The ten and five are the fingers.

132. Two sisters live together with one husband.
Tongs.

133. From the tree-top falls a green leaf.
A parrot comes down to feed.

134. The goad with a little mouth. Who knows what it is?
The person who is bitten knows.

135. Catch it firmly, throw it away.
Nasal discharge.

136. The pillar of the Raja's house sounds *has mas*
The Raja shakes it and it trembles *dal dal.*
Plantain.

137. The fruit of the jungle climbs to the sky.
Whirlwind.

138. A crooked footprint on a broad leaf.
The navel.

139. Throw it down, but it won't break.
Kosa-cocoon.

140. On a burnt tree the vultures sit.
People round liquor.

141. The Manjhi who fells you to the ground.
Landa rice-beer.

142. The roasted hen jumps alive out of its own bottom.
Burnt grass springing up again.

143. The fencing is decorated, the water of the tank sparkles. If you don't know the answer, you will be a girl's *kabāri* (bond-servant).
A mirror.

144. The earth is sticky: the lid is the broken half of a pot.
Tortoise.

145. Bastar's Raja and Kanker's Rani have the same face.
Mandia and sarson seed.

146. When he eats, his thighs are swollen.
A man puffs out his cheeks as he plays the mohori-trumpet.

147. The Mohammedan's horse is full of holes; however many mount it, it never wearies.
A country cot.

148. The leather is cut into threads. The thread is tied to seven drums. Some is tied in a knot, some is tied to a cot, the rest is put out to dry, and the kite without claws comes and kicks it down.
A spider's web spoilt by the wind.

149. The pole stands up without support.
Hair.

150. There's a bunch of corn on the withered tree.
A scorpion.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. Folk-tales

x883 538 Folk-tales and legends are told in the ghotul if there is a boy there who knows any. There does not seem to be a formal 'right' of possession over a particular story, but in practice certain stories are connected with special people. One boy knows a story which was taught him by an elder boy on leaving the ghotul or by his father, and this boy is always called on to recite it.

x883 538 533 No one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of these stories, which are often in a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who 'owned' it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole ghotul joined in the chorus:

Rai sarso sarso phul nunike nāngar gurdum—gurdum gurdum gurdum.
Rākas bukas barma bhut des nuni kuchi kuvar—gurdum gurdum gurdum.

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdum*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying '*Hingo*, Yes', at the right moments.

x883 538 Most of these stories have been published separately for it would have taken too much space to include them here.[1] I am, however, giving two narrative poems which throw some light on conditions of life in the ghotul. The first is the Ghotul Pata mentioned above, which illustrates the custom of a ceremonial beat for fish before a festival, the appointment of the Gaita's children as ghotul leaders, and the relations of brother and sister in the dormitory.

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Ghotul Pata of Markabera

539 The Gaita of the village gathered them all together saying,
'Look brothers, the month of Magh has come again,
And we must decide about the Mango Festival'.
Everyone came and eagerly decided,
For already other villages had kept the Festival.
'Certainly, we also will keep the Festival, but what curry shall we eat?'
'Haven't we many chelik and motiari in our ghotul?
Send the chelik and motiari to catch fish for the Festival.'
So said the leaders, and the chelik and motiari prepared to go.
When they were ready the chelik and motiari went to catch fish.

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[1] See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), which includes many Muria stories; some appear to be original, others turn on such universal motifs as those of the Quest, Grateful Animals, Brother-Sister Incest, the Hero on Pilgrimage.

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There the Gaita's son Negi was leader of the chelik,
And his daughter too was leader of the girls.
In the midst of the jungle, there was a lake which they emptied.
While the others were emptying it, Negi lay down and slept,
Though Negi was one of a party of chelik and motiari.
Draining, draining this water, at last the tank was emptied and the fish were caught.
They all started home, but no one woke up Negi.
Even his sister had forgotten him, but she remembered on the way.
She said, 'My brother is sleeping, go and wake him up'.
This she said to everyone, but no one listened to her.

So she left them and herself went back to wake him up.
She thought in her mind, 'How am I to wake him?
If I touch him and wake him, they will say I am his wife'.
Thinking thus, she took some clay from a white-ant hill to rouse him.
She threw it at his head, with this she woke him up.
The sister then started to go back home,
And Negi also got up and walked along behind her.
The chelik and motiari on their way thought they would laugh at them.
The chelik and motiari began to say to them,
'You two, sister and brother, must have been to one another,
So from our caste we are going to turn you out'.
Thus talking they reached the house of their parents, and told them this story.
In anger they turned them out of the village.

These two left that country and went to seek another.
Thus walking for days, Negi and his sister left their own country.
They had no rice, and on the way they grew very hungry.
On they went and at last they reached a forest-clearing.
In that clearing there was a creeper of cucumbers.
Of the fruit only two were ripe, all the rest were green.
The owner counted them every day; then the old man went to sleep in his house.
From this same creeper Negi took one cucumber, and the two shared it together.
Next day when the old man came, he found one ripe cucumber was missing.
He returned to his house and told his old woman,
'I don't know who has eaten our cucumber, but be quick and make my food,
I will make a machan there and sleep to watch my creeper'.

The old woman, his wife, cooked his food quickly;
He ate it and went back to his clearing and made a machan.
The old man was sleeping there when Negi came again.
The old man asked him, 'Who are you that steals my cucumber?'

'I am the son of your younger brother.
My sister and I have been turned out from our country.
Old father, we have come to you for shelter, for we have been starving.'

The old man and woman thought to themselves,
'We have no children and if we keep these two,

They will earn money and look after us'.
Thinking thus, they took them to their home and Negi began to earn.

The old man went out to find a wife for Negi.
Having found the girl, he married him.
Negi's wife stayed for two months, then ran away.
The old man and old woman, they also died soon.
Afterwards, the brother and sister thought thus:
'Those two were protecting us, they were our mother and father,
We will perform funeral rites in their honour.'

Negi chelik now was ready to wander in the jungle.
He had two dogs, whose names were Sauran and Bhauran:
Taking these two dogs with him, he went wandering through the jungle.
His sister in the house thought thus:
'My brother has gone to the jungle, he will come back hungry,
I will cook food quickly.'

So thinking she went to find some fire.
She went round the village searching, she grew tired but could not find it.
She saw smoke somewhere in the jungle:
To that place she went for fire.
That fire was in the abode of a Churelin.
The Churelin was not in the house, but her son was there,
'O brother, give me fire', said the girl.

Seeing the girl, he thought, 'I will keep this girl'.
There was a broken earthen pot,
He made a small hole at the bottom.
Above it he put ash and on the ash he put fire,
And he gave it to her.
He did this so that as she went, the ashes might fall on the way.
The girl went home and kindled fire and prepared rice and curry.
From towards the jungle her brother came back home.
To him she served food and ate herself.

Next day the Churelin's son followed the ash and came to her house.
When he arrived, the girl was pounding rice.
The boy came in and sat in her lap.
The girl said, 'Go away, for if my brother sees you,
He will kill you', thus said the girl.
But when he would not go, she took him in and hid him in an earthen pot.

He said, 'In my mother's house there is a mango tree,
Send your brother there for mangoes and my mother will catch him and
devour him'.
Hearing this, the girl decided to do as he told her.
When her brother came home she sent him out for mangoes.
The boy went to pick mangoes with his two dogs.
He climbed the mango tree and began to pick them.
'Why are you plucking my mangoes?' Saying this, the Churelin came
out of the house.
Negi seeing this was frightened, but the dogs were underneath the tree.
He signalled to them and they began to chase her.
The dogs bit and killed her and Negi came home with the mangoes.
Negi gave the mangoes to his sister and she ate them.

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The girl went in and said to the Churelin's son,
'The Churelin was no match for my brother, for he has killed her'.
The boy said, 'Say to your brother, "I cannot sleep.
O brother, go and bring the flower of sleep, then only can I sleep".
If you say so, he will go to bring the flower.
He will die there as he seeks the flower, and we will live happily.'
Hearing this, she said so to her brother,
'I cannot sleep, brother, go bring the flower of sleep'.

Negi got ready to bring this flower.
The flower of sleep was beyond three seas.
The seas were in the way, he could not reach the flower.
He came to the sea, and there was a frog who asked him:
'Where are you going and what are you going to bring?'
'My sister cannot sleep, so I am going to bring the flower of sleep.'
Negi said to the frog, 'Will you help me cross the sea?'
The frog hearing this helped him cross the sea.
When he had crossed one sea, there was another. There was no way to go.
There too he searched for a way across and could not find it.

There was a crocodile and Negi said to it,
'I am going to find the flower of sleep, will you help me cross the sea?'
And the crocodile helped him to do so.
When he had crossed the sea, on the other side there lived a Raja.
He had a beautiful daughter who slept in a house apart.
Before this house there was a tamarind.
Negi made his camp beneath this tree.
The Raja's daughter saw Negi.
She asked him, 'Why have you come?'
Negi said, 'My sister cannot sleep and I am going to bring the flower of sleep for her'.
She said, 'Don't go yourself, I will send someone to bring it for you'.
Saying this she took Negi to her house and called her mother.
'Mother, I cannot sleep, will you get me the flower of sleep?'
Hearing this the Rani went to bring the flower.
She brought the flower and stuck it over the door.

The whole night Negi slept with the princess.
Then he travelled home and came to his sister.
Negi asked his sister why she had tried to kill him.
She swore she was innocent, and Negi drew his sword.
'If you are truthful your tongue will not be cut even by a sword,
If you are not truthful, your tongue will be cut'.[1]
His sister touched the sword with her tongue, and it was cut immediately,
And so her brother killed her with the sword.
He cut her body into seven pieces.
The Churelin's son was watching all this from the house.
Through fear he ran out of the house.
Negi saw him and ran after him to catch him.
He caught him and killed him.

After this he married the princess and they began to earn their living.
After a few days Negi became rich.

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[1] In Bastar, as in other States, the royal swords are regarded as sacred. Many aboriginals regard an oath on a sword as specially binding.

Now he thought, 'Let me go and see what my parents are doing'.
Taking with him all his wealth, he went to his parents' country.
There he built a big house and began to live there.
His parents had been rich when he was living with them.
After he was driven out, they became very poor.
They used to beg from house to house,
And even then got scarce enough to fill their stomachs.
They were so poor that even the dogs did not look at them.

The father came to Negi for alms.
'O merchant, give me something, for I am very poor.'
He said thus, and did not recognize Negi.
But his son recognized him and said,
'Where do you come from, and where is your house?
How many children have you got?'
'O merchant, I had one son whom I turned out of my country.
Since then I have become a poor man.'
'Who am I, do you recognize me?'
'O merchant, I cannot recognize you', said the old man.
'I am your son, whom you drove out of your house.'
Hearing this the old man was frightened.
He fell at his son's feet and caught them firmly with his hands.
From that day Negi kept him in his house.
They lived and ate together and ruled their affairs.

The Marriage of Siri Somni Raja

The following song (the original of which is in Gondi) was recorded at Penjori, two miles away from the famous shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon. It gives a vivid picture of a Muria betrothal. In places it almost suggests a world ruled by chelik and motiari. The punishment of the Rani by the Manjhi is entirely in the ghotul tradition. The early list of ghotul titles is interesting.

The earth of villages was born,
Places and lands were born,
Mata Maoli was born,
In the world above were many islands,
In the world below were seven islands,
In the middle was Singaldip.
To the Gaita belonged the villages.
There was a Manjhi.
There was the Raja's land, land of four corners.
There was a Raja Siri Somni,
He was a little boy.
The father of Siri Somni was Kunkal Siri Raja.
Kunkal Siri Raja died.
The mother of Siri Somni Raja was Bai Dursal Rani.
She wept very loudly crying, 'O my Lord has died.
Here is my land of villages, what am I to do?
I am a woman, I have a son,
He knows not how to read a paper,
He knows not how to do justice.
What am I to do?'

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Siri Somni Raja daily grew older,
He ate milk and ghee and butter,
He slept in gold cotton,
He rubbed red powder on his body,
He grew tall as a shrub,
He grew bigger daily.
He became mature,
Siri Somni Raja.

Then said Bai Dursal Rani,
'I'll arrange the marriage of my son,
I'll perform his marriage'.
'With what city's Rani?'
'There is a girl in Kathingpura city.'
'Whose daughter is she?'
'She is the daughter of Katsunga Rani.'
So she thought in her mind.
The Rani sent to arrange the betrothal.
'I'll marry her in her cradle.
I've many servants,
I've my Negi Jogi,
I've my Pande Pardhan,
Hear my word all of you.'
'What's the matter, Rani?'
'Kathingpura city,
Go there for the betrothal.
I'll marry her in her cradle.'

Negi Jogi got ready,
Pande Pardhan got ready.
'We will go, Maharani.'
Three handfuls of pulse,
He ate it raw,
Diwan Kahattri sat to eat it.
Jaribkhan Musalman,
With a crippled hand ate his food raw.
Bodelal was a chilli-eater.
Many kinds of curry made with ghee,
Eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
Two kinds of curry made with mahua oil,
Curry of bitter *karela*,
They ate the thirty-two different kinds of food,
Those men who were going for the betrothal.
That is how they ate their food.

This is how they dressed.
In dhoti of *pitambar* cloth,
With other cloth like gold,
With shoes on their feet,
Shoes made of sambhar skin,
Boots covered with the skins of mice,
Their stockings made of lizard skin,
Hiknal and Kamdar prepared to go.
They put on their ornaments,

X893 They had supari nuts of iron,
Their *pān* was made of pipal leaves,
539 They were chewing it *mayare, mayare,*
Colouring their teeth.
Holding sticks in their hands,
Their turban's flap like a Banjari bullock's tail.

They went along like old bullocks,
They went three days' journey.
O the spear of the mahua tree!
They went carrying the spear.
Then they approached the city,
They did Johar to their father-in-law.
'Who are you calling father-in-law?'
'We are your sister's sons.'
When they said this, they brought a long and broad cot for them,
Carpet-soft fit for a Raja.
They put the spear down on a stone,
They had their grass bundles with them,
They gave grass to the spear,
And the spear ate the grass.

'Hear, *māma*, hear,
We have come to wear a flower.'
'What flower is this you want to wear?
What flower can you get now?
If you had come at Diwali, you could have worn the pumpkin flower,
You could have worn the flower of the beanstalk,
You could have put them in your ears.'
'We have not come for flowers like those.
You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'What is this you are saying, my sister's son?
My daughter is a child, what will you do to her?
She is swinging in her cradle.'
'Her I will marry in the cradle.
Hear, *māma*, hear, let us talk of marriage,
I have lack of nothing, I have a twelve-year pig,
I have an eighty-years castrated goat,
I have rice and pulse in plenty.'
Thus they arranged the marriage to take place in two-and-a-half months'
time.
'We are going, let the matter thus remain,
We will come in two-and-a-half months.'

Then they did Johar and went back home to Bai Dursal Rani.
Diwan Kahattri asked, 'What did you do with the flower?'
'We did well; the marriage will be in two-and-a-half months' time.'
'There were men of twelve villages, O Rani,
We settled everything with them.'
'Call the men of nine towns for Siri Somni's marriage;
There are many villages all around, like a bunch of bells.'
Such was this country;
The market was as in the days of their fathers;
There were Gaita and cultivators and Manjhi Mukasi,
There were poor men and rich; it was a great country.

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In this country there were chelik and motiari.
There are seven-score girls and six-score boys,
There are boys in the ghotul lovely as a bison horn.
There is a leader of the seven-score girls,
Her name is Gadakare Mode.
Her navel is one cubit long,
She looks like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.
Bai Durual Rani was thinking in her mind:
'The chelik and motiari of my village will bring leaves and wood.
In the upper village there is Negi Sai Kotwar;
Go and call the Kotwar, bring him quickly here.'
'Come, Kotwar, the Rani is calling you.'
'Why is she calling me? I have stolen nothing.'
His soul trembled *duk duk*,
For fifteen days he could not eat.
He put on a cloth one cubit long.
He went to the Rani and asked her what she wanted.
'I want nothing, but there are nine towns:
There are chelik and motiari there.
Go and fetch them for the marriage of Siri Somni;
Beat your drum and bid them come;
Tell them to bring leaves and wood.'
'I am hungry, Rani, give me gruel to eat.'
'There is no gruel, Kotwar, what can I do?
There is rice-water twelve years old,
Frogs and lizards have fallen in it.'
'I like such gruel; give me some to eat.'
She gave him a measure of salt and a handful of chillies,
His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pitos pitos*.
'There will be coarse rice in the small houses,
There will be fine rice in the big houses,
We will bring it for the marriage.'
So saying the Kotwar drank his gruel.
He so filled up his belly that his loin-cord broke.
The Kotwar was naked, he got up and ran away.
His penis was one-and-a-half handspans long,
His pubic hairs were one cubit long,
With his two hands he hid his penis and so ran away.

There was a grazier woman wearing twelve cubits of cloth.
He went to her and snatched her cloth away,
The Kotwar tied that dhoti down to his knees.
The grazier woman ran away covering her vagina with her hands.
The seven-score chelik were playing marbles in the ghotul.
She ran into the midst of them.
The boys cried, 'She is taking away our marbles'.
So saying, those boys chased her.
They cried, 'Don't take away our marbles, grazier girl'.
The grazier girl was running in front, the boys ran behind.
She went into her house, the boys followed her inside.
Her vagina was one handspan broad,

x 883 Her clitoris was four fingers long,
Her pubic hairs were long as thatching grass.
539 The grazier girl removed her hands, the boys saw the sight.

Negi Sai Kotwar was beating his drum,
Proclaiming the marriage of Siri Somni Raja.
There was the chelik Singa, handsome as the *singa* fish;
There was the chelik Pola, like a deer's tail;
The crippled Nawje was carrying an axe;
The long-haired Latiya held a spear;
Welal had a battle-axe;
The stupid staring Bakke was carrying a lizard;
Chital had a rat;
Batal had a hare.
There was Gadakare Mode;
There was Gango like a *gogum* flower;
Big-cheeked Buke distributed rice-husks;
Broken-fingered Thoti gave out curry;
Bhime was stitching leaves;
Mule sat silent;
Gengre called the pigs, snuffling through her nose.
Little Thubri was going to market;
Dogri was picking beans;
Lahari was picking brinjals.
Singal chelik was driving the cart,
Driven by uncle-nephew buffaloes.
The motiari went with Singal,
The chelik told them to go,
They went to pick leaves for the marriage.
They went to the golden hill with the noise of a thousand men,
They gathered wood and came home shouting.

Singal chelik prepared to go with them,
Gadakare Modé also prepared her cart.
Her navel was seven cubits long.
Singal chelik yoked the uncle-nephew buffaloes to his cart.
Singal went ahead with the cart, and the others followed.
They went with the clamour of a thousand men.
As they went to Siri Somni Raja, they passed a river on the way.
The girl Gadakare Mode was thinking in her mind,
'I will block the road[1] and not let them pass'.
She went into the river-bed and dug the sand,
She hid there covering herself with sand;
Everything was covered but her navel stump.
Singal brought the cart by that way and drove it over the navel stump;
The axle stuck against the stump, but Singal tried to urge the cart forward.
He was beating the buffaloes.
They were saying, 'What has the cart stuck on?'
There was a one-eyed boy, he saw what it was.

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[1] *Hew chekna*, to stretch a rope across the way before a marriage party or hunters returning successful from a beat. It is a form of Neng: see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, p. 9.

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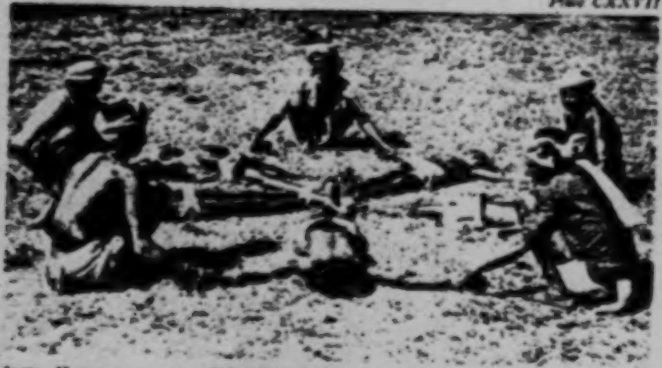
Plate CXXVII



Jatta Karsana
at Metawand

Mao Karsana:
Hunt-the-Buffalo,
at Markabera

Gudina Karsana:
Rolling-over game,
at Koilibera

[p. 606 (N)]

Plate CXXVIII

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Wanjing Karsana: Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon

[252]

Rice-husking in fact

[p.606(B)]

x883 'So many boys and girls were here, but none of them could see it,
539 But I the one-eyed boy have seen it,
It is the girl Mode who has done this.'
'Listen, O Mode, we know it is you who has blocked the road.'
'Yes, it is, but this is my custom.'
'You have stopped the cart with your navel stump,
Now let it go, we will give you liquor.'
Then Mode let the cart go by.

The boys brought wood and leaves,
They took them to the palace of Bai Dursal Rani.
Rani Dursal sent Negi Jogi and Pande Pardhan to bring the bride.
A thousand men went to bring her, a three days' journey they went,
They went to Kathingpura city.
Jangobai, the daughter of Katsunga Rani was swinging in her cradle.
They had come for her marriage, the Raja and Rani also came there,
She was swinging in her cradle and crying *taring taring*.
They brought her to Siri Somni's house with a great noise of drums.
In that palace of seven rooms there was the marriage.
Inside was Siri Somni and outside Jangobai in her cradle.
So the cradle marriage was performed.
Then the Manjhi asked about *paisuni*.[1]

The Manjhi was a Dhurwa, he had no moustaches; it was he who asked this.
His head was like a booth overgrown with beans,
His eyes were like small earthen pots,
His nose was like a bamboo pole,
His teeth were like choppers,
His chest was as big as a cart-wheel,
His ears were like winnowing-fans,
His legs were like branches of the *pirsi* tree,
His beard was like a broom,
His moustaches were like thatching grass,
His eyebrows were like ears of *hirwa*-pulse,
His rectum was like a pit in the field.
The Manjhi was like this, he was an important Manjhi.
There was a mongoose whose fur was like thatching grass.
It asked Gadakare Mode for a present.
'What can I give you? I will give you a rupee,
I will give you gold and silver.'
'I don't want these things, what I want is your breasts.'
Then the mongoose jumped over her breasts and cut them off.
This Gadakare Mode went to the chelik;
When the boys saw her they asked her where she had been.
'I have been to relieve myself.'
'Don't deceive us, we know what you have been up to.'

Siri Somni Raja was growing bigger every day,
Jangobai Maharani was also growing up every day.
Siri Somni looked on her as his sister.
Jangobai called him her elder brother.

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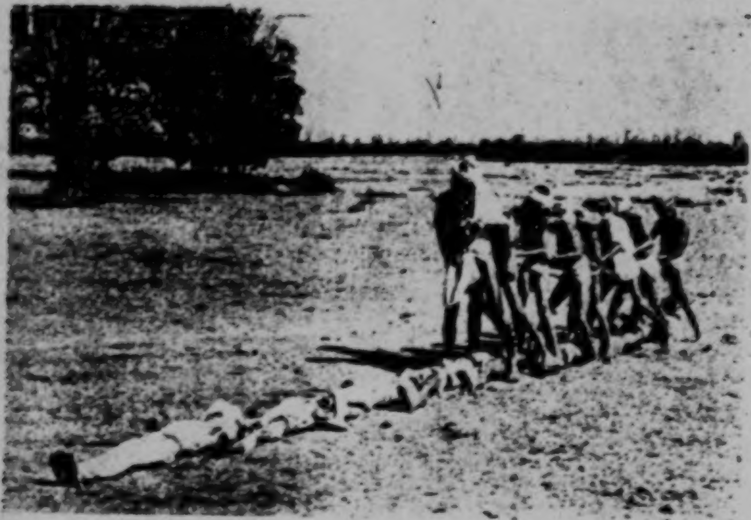
[1] Chhattisgarhi expression for sending a girl to her husband's house when she has matured.

x 883 They used to go together to relieve themselves,
They used to sleep and play together,
539 They used to eat and drink and sit together.
Then the Raja became mature.
In youth there is strength, in age disease.
So passed seven years of Siri Somni's life.

Then Jangobai Rani also became mature.
Rani Dursal looked on her as her daughter.
The Manjhi thought to himself, 'Why does she call her daughter-in-law daughter?
Let us go and explain things to the Rani'.
So the Manjhi went to her and the Rani came out.
She gave him a cot and the Manjhi sat upon it.
Then he explained to her that Jangobai was her daughter-in-law, not her daughter,
'We have come to tell you this, now we are going away'.
The Manjhi went to Sonorupo Kalarin's house.
'O Kalarinbai, give me as much liquor as can be made by twelve out-stills.'
She gave it to him to drink in a pot;
The Manjhi drank himself drunk from a *parsa* leaf.
'Send some men to bring the Rani here.'
They went to call the Rani,
They went to the Rani and said, 'The Manjhi is calling you'.
The Rani said, 'Why is he calling me, I have not punished anyone,
I have not stolen anything', but she prepared to go,
The Rani went to the Darbar.
She saluted the Muria with Johar and the Hindus with Ram Ram,
And salaamed also Jaribkhan Pathan.

The Manjhi approached her holding in his hand a *chamargoia* stone.
He made the Rani hold the stone against her ears and get up and down.
In this way he punished her.
At last the Rani grew tired, and there was pain in her knees;
She begged the Manjhi to let her go.
'Why are you punishing me?'
'Because you were calling your daughter-in-law your daughter.'
'She used to call me mother, what else could I do?'
'Now you must do this, rub wood-ash on your body,
And so rubbing yourself with ashes, go to your daughter-in-law.'
She was inside the house, she was swinging in her swing.
The Rani called, 'Daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law, O Jangobai'.
The girl came out and asked, 'What is that white stuff on your body?
Have you taken opium and liquor, O mother?'
'I have taken no opium or liquor, daughter-in-law.'
'Don't call me daughter-in-law, that is sinful,
For I am not yet betrothed to any man.'
Jangobai got angry and seized Dursalbai by the hair;
She kicked her and hit her with her fists.
'Don't beat me, daughter-in-law, wait a little.'
Jangobai beat her and satisfied her anger.

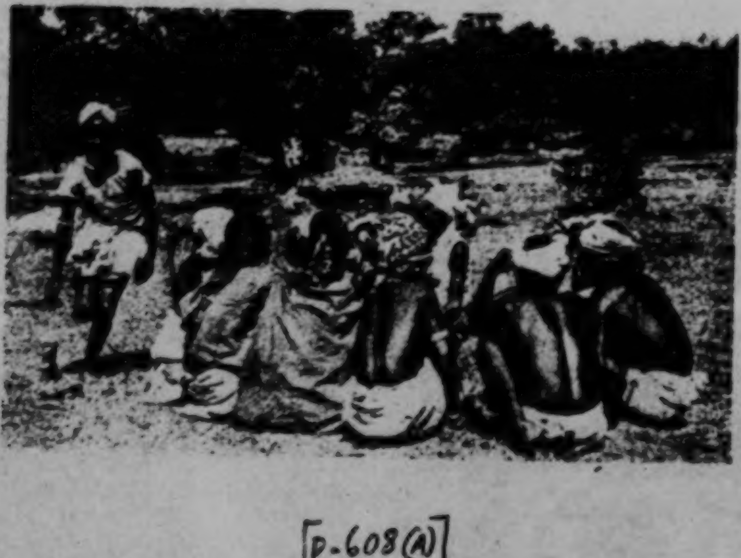
Holding the water-pot in her hand, she prepared to fetch water,
She went to fetch water at the old tank, to cook thirty-two kinds of food.



Tedapotur Karsana
at Sidhawand

Plate CXXIX

Manjmeta chelik playing
the Watia Karsana



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CXXX The Root Game

Planting the roots

Pulling up a root

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Plate CXXXI

Carrying the roots to be washed in the river

Washing the roots

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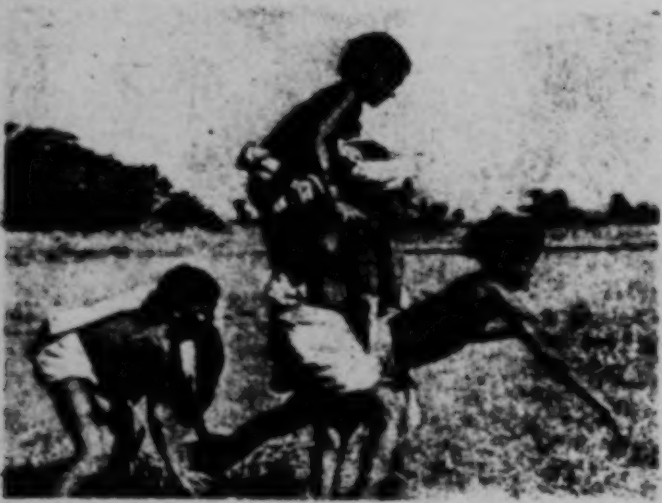
Plate CXXXII



The Mogral Karsana, or Crocodile game

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Wrestling at Koilibera

[p. 608(a)]

OTHER RECREATIONS

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Jangobai went to fetch water,
She went along the footpath to fetch water.
Seven pairs of girls were on the path.
The Rani was going along the path and the girls asked her,
'Where are you going, Rani, you never go this way?
Where has your husband gone? You should have him with you'.
'I am not married, girls, I have no husband.'
'When you were in the cradle then you were married.'
The Rani said to them, 'Don't talk indecently'.
As she took out the water, she said to them,
'If I have a husband, I will draw clear water,
If I have no husband, the water will be like blood'.
So saying she took out the water,
It was clear water that she drew.
Taking the water in a pot she went home.
She said, 'Where is the rice?'
'Look in the house, there is rice and pulse, O daughter-in-law,
There is every kind of curry made of ghee, and eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
O daughter-in-law, Siri Somni Raja is coming now,
When the Raja comes, give him water in his hand,
Put a tooth-twig in his hand and give him water for his bath.'
When the Raja came his Rani gave him water in his hand.
'O Raja, take this twig and use it.'
'You are my sister, how is it you are giving me water in my hand?'
So saying the Raja ran away for shame.
Daughter-in-law Jango Rani took her food and went to sleep.
After eating, the food that remained was hung from the roof.

At night Jango slept on the threshold on her cot.
The Raja came at night and knocked against the cot.
Siri Somni Raja thought in his mind,
'If I go under the cot, they will say he went under his sister,
If I go above the cot, they will say he went to his sister,
But somehow or other I will go inside the house'.
The Raja went over the cot into the house,
The Raja was hungry, he was searching for food,
He found the food hanging from the roof,
There was a dish which fell down.
Bai Dursal Rani said,
'Get up, daughter-in-law, the cat with half a tail may have come'.
Jangobai got up and shut the door.
She went inside and began to quarrel.
The next day the Raja thought, 'I will demand three-score ploughs in service'.
He said to the mother, 'Bring gruel'.
The plough was of iron, the yoke also was of iron,
In the hen's egg was gruel, in the pea-hen's egg was rice,
In the pigeon's egg was curry.
She took it to the ploughing place.
Siri Somni Raja was ploughing,
Jangobai Rani took the gruel there.
'O Raja, lift down the food, it is a very heavy load.'

x883 The Raja came and beat Jangobai.
Thence the Raja went to sit in his Darbar.
539 She gave the gruel to the ploughmen,
She gave them rice and returned home.
She said to her mother-in-law, 'I will not remain here.
Your son did not greet me, how can I remain?'
She took off her ornaments and put them in a basket,
She did Johar to Pande Pardhan,
She fell at the feet of her mother-in-law,
She did Johar to the servants.
Jangobai Rani went away taking her basket with her,
Jangobai was going along the road.
'Look, who is going on the road? Recover the road money.'
Majjar Khan Mussalman went to take the money.
'Where are you going, girl? Pay me the road money.'
'What shall I give? I have nothing, brother.'
She was wearing a ring on her finger, she was ready to give it.
Jangobai Rani gave him the ring.
He tied it to his waist, but it fell down;
He tied it to his cloth, but it fell down;
After that he wore it on his little finger where it stayed.
The lice on his head gathered in one place.

Siri Somni Raja stood up and went home,
He went inside the palace of nine rooms,
He slept on the long broad bed,
He slept on the bed facing upwards.
He saw a comb in the rafters.
The Raja tried to get the comb but it disappeared.
On that comb there was written the story of his marriage,
Of his marriage when he was a child in the cradle.
'Which is that Rani?' 'She is the Rani of Kathingpura.'
Jangobai's marriage was done when she was a child in the cradle.
The Rani's marriage was performed outside the palace in her cradle,
While inside was the Raja.
Thus it was written and the Raja read the story when he found the comb.
The Raja asked his mother Bai Dursal,
'Where has my wife Jangobai gone?'
'She has only gone to the bazaar to buy bangles.'

He went to the bazaar and there the Manjhi's daughter was wearing bangles.
He thought, 'This is my wife', and hit her thrice.
She said, 'Why are you beating me? I will make a report about you'.
'I thought you were my wife, that's why I beat you. It was a mistake,
Don't report the matter, I will give you five rupees.'
He returned to the house and again asked his mother, 'Where's my wife?'
'Your wife has left the house, my son.'
'I will go to look for her, make ready pulse and rice.'
He prepared his horse called Bagri Maro,
He decorated the saddle like a pharsa flower,
Bai Dursal Rani prepared the food.
Siri Somni Raja took it in a bundle.
He took his hostile knife and his sword like a lizard's foot.

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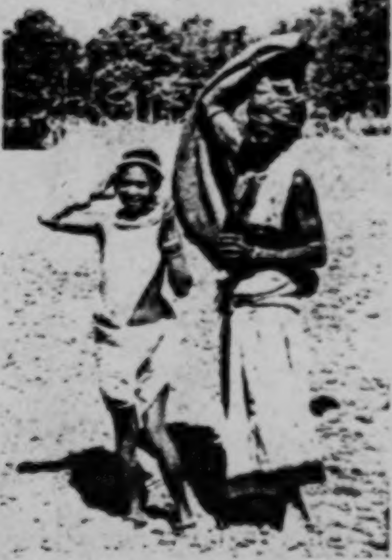
Plate CXXXIII

Kor Karsana

1. Revealing a cock
2. Guessing the cock

1



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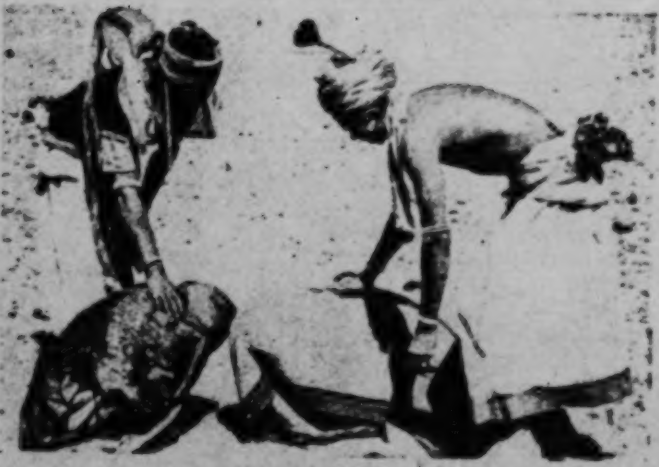

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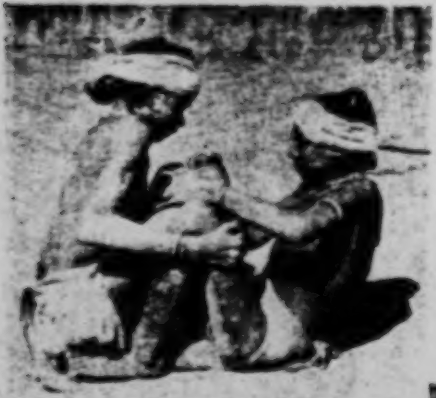
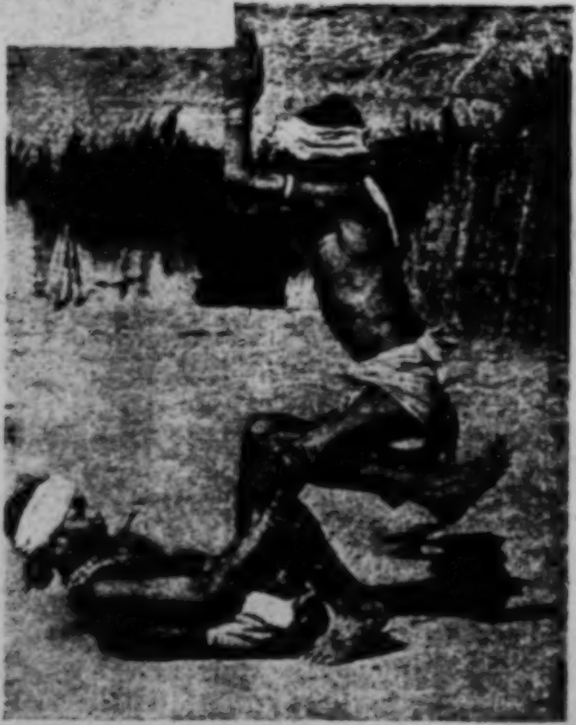
Plate CXXXIV



The Purad-opihana Karsana which imitates the movements of the wood-pigeon



[p. 610 (B)]

OTHER RECREATIONS

883 Siri Somni Raja tied them to his waist.
He prayed to the Hanal Pen[1] to look after him,
539 'I am going to search for my wife, you must help me'.
Bai Dursal Rani said, 'Do not go, my son'.

He beat the horse with a cobra snake for whip.
The horse Bagri Maro flew into the air.
Jango Rani was going ahead, the Raja followed her.
He could not catch her, he was a full two miles behind.
He reached the kingdom of Molol Sai.[2]
Molol Sai had seven wives, sitting in a palace of seven rooms.
Siri Somni went by riding on his horse.
The seven Ranis saw Siri Somni Raja.
'Call him, sister, we will give him a pipe to smoke.'
The Rani, seeing him, stood in the way,
She caught the bridle of the horse Bagri Maro.
'Where are you going, brother? Come to my house and smoke a pipe.'
'I do not smoke, nor do I eat tobacco.'
'You are a man, how is it you don't know how to smoke tobacco? You are like a woman.'
Shamed by these words the Raja then went to her house.
Four seers of lime and one seer of tobacco
She powdered and put it in the pipe.
The Raja pulled at the pipe and fire burst out.
With that fire the palace was burnt down.
He mounted his horse and rode away.
Molol Sai Raja had gone to eat gram.

Siri Somni Raja came to the land where everything was gum.
He saw gum on the way and halted by it.
He took fire-sticks from his pocket and burnt the gum.
Now he came to the land covered with traps.
There in a trap a sambhar had been caught.
He made his horse stand and went into the trap.
He went in, and relieved himself, coming out he let the trap-door fall.
He mounted the horse and rode away.
He came to Raimunda Garh where lived Dera Manga Raja,
And there was his Rani.
When he reached there, he found his Rani by his guru-magic.
He caught her and brought her to his kingdom.
On the way was the river Surung.
He reached it and prepared their food for dinner.

Jango Rani went to bathe in that river.
There were sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river.
As she was bathing, a bod-fish ate her.
Siri Somni Raja was cooking their food.
There were Nahar there, and they killed the Raja.
Two mongoose brothers called Jar Khandi came there.
They prepared to restore his life to Siri Somni Raja.
The mongoose gave life to the Raja.

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[1] The Departed, his clan-ancestors.

[2] Lord of the hares.

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The Raja came alive and went to find his Rani.
He crossed the sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river,
By his guru-magic he drank up the water of the tank.
In the tank there was no water, only the fish were left.
The Raja looked into the bellies of the fishes.
He found no trace of his Rani and he grew weary.
There was a frog and the Raja prepared to split open its belly.
The frog cried, '*Tarang tarang*, don't do this, O Raja,
I will tell you where your Rani is, but don't cut me open,
The bod-fish has eaten her and it is not here;
That fish has gone to Basum Katri's kingdom'.

There was a Kewat, and he killed the fish;
He caught the fish in his *dandar* trap made with thorns;
He took the fish home, and began to cut it up.
Jangobai was inside that fish's stomach.
She called out from inside, 'Cut carefully, O father'.
Hearing this the old man cut carefully.
Jangobai then came out from the fish's stomach.
When they saw her, the old man and his wife were very pleased;
'We have no son or daughter, we will keep this girl'.
Jangobai Rani looked like a fire.
Basum Katri Raja went to see his city.
He saw Jangobai and thought in his mind that he would marry her;
He said to the old Kewat and his wife,
'Give me your daughter, I will marry her'.
'This is a poor man's daughter, how can you marry her?'
'Somehow or other I will marry her.'
Basum Katri Raja prepared for the marriage.
The marriage was performed, all but the Lagir.
Siri Somni came there searching for his wife;
Siri Somni Raja came as a sadhu,
To the place where Basum Katri's marriage was being celebrated.
He sat there, saying: 'Hey Ram, Ram'.
He said to Basum Katri Raja,
'There is some trouble in your house, I will relieve it'.
'Maharaj, save me from this trouble.'
'I will do tika and thus save you from trouble.'
He pretended to put tika, but carried off his Rani.

Basum Katri Raja pursued them.
Siri Somni was ahead, Basum Katri followed.
On the way they met and fought,
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail.
The knife was like a jackal's tongue and the straight sword like a dog's tongue.
They fought with these weapons but did no damage to each other.
They fought and fought, but neither could prevail.
Siri Somni said to Basum Katri Raja,
'I will come as rain, you try to stop the river'.
Basum Katri Raja laid down across the river,
Siri Somni rained for three days.
The river flooded and carried away Basum Katri Raja.

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The next day the Raja went to look for him.
Basum Katri Raja had been caught against a tree.
Siri Somni Raja found him there.
Siri Somni Raja said to Basum Katri Raja,
'Which of our mouths is red? Let's open them to see'.
So Siri Somni Raja deceived him.
Basum Katri Raja opened his mouth.
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail pierced through his mouth.
Then Basum Katri Raja died.
Siri Somni took his wife home.
They reached their village and lived there and ate.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

It is a cart, if you know how to drive, boy.
It is a food, if you know how to eat, boy.
It is a path, if you know how to walk, boy.
It is a horse, if you know how to ride, boy.

—*Marriage song* (*Lagir Pata*) *of Malakot*

I

581 AMONGST ourselves marriage is so closely associated with an initiation into a sexual union and experience that was previously tabooed, that it is not easy at first to adjust ourselves to the outlook of a society that can so clearly distinguish between sexual love without marriage and domestic love within it.

For a Muria the sexual side of marriage is comparatively unimportant; he marries because he wants to have children whom he can call his own, so that he can have a home of his own, and so that he can have a partner whom he can regard as his own, over whom he has authority and a right, with whom relationship will be permanent and recognized.

This is not mere individualism; it is part of the process of growing up. It is the discovery that sexual excitement is not enough; it is often, as we shall see, the still deeper discovery that romantic attachment is not always the best foundation for a lifelong union. There is a beautiful saying in the *Rigveda* (III, 53, 4)—'Wife is the home; she alone is the place of rest'—which is well paralleled by something said by a young Muria wife at Phunder about life with her husband: 'It was like sitting down on a stool after a long and troubled journey.'

The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. This desire is naturally more emphatic in the ghotul where partners are often changed. In Kongera a Muria said, 'You only get real pleasure from your own property; in the ghotul it is always someone else's'. And Gando of Jaitpuri said, 'I often remember my life in the ghotul, but you can't get that happiness always. That is only for four days, but life in your very own home lasts'. Man and wife become each other's property; they get a *haq* or 'right' over each other; and because everybody respects this right, regarding adultery as evil and dangerous, Muria marriage is secure and is not marred by fear, the source of jealousy.

Every Muria contrasts the free happy life in the ghotul with the economic drudgery of marriage. 'The ghotul is for happiness,' they said at Nayanar. 'The home is for work.' The Jamadar of Sorma said, 'Don't ask me about my youth, for in those days I never lacked tobacco and lime. But now I have lost my happiness in thinking always of my belly'. Many songs underline the contrast.

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O the kingdom of the unmarried!
You will never see that kingdom more.
Of housework you know nothing.
You went wandering in the fields,
Looking like a sarus crane.
Early morning you would go;
Evening you'd come home again.

O that beautiful ghotul! 581
Every day you went to clean it. 539
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

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The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasise this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a house, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Masora, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organise marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and house. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

X883 593 regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

X883 582 But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinised, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

[583]

Lamhada (marriage by service)[2]	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives)	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	575

X883 582 586 These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

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[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr E. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lamhada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Type of Marriage	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	Percentage of Divorces
Marriage by service ..	113	13	11·50
Marriage with ghotul-wife ..	77	9	11·68
Others marrying in the same ghotul	575	2	0·34
Marriages between members of different ghotul ..	1235	35	2·83

One other figure may be given. Out of the 2000 men questioned 316 admitted that they had had some connexion with their wives before marriage, either at a festival or marriage, during a dancing expedition or at a bazaar. Of these 14 or 4·4 per cent were divorced later. This figure, of course, includes the 77 who married their ghotul-wives.

These statistics seem to me important. They suggest in the first place that where the rules of avoidance are properly observed, there is no danger to future happiness in betrothed couples growing up together. That 573 out of 575 of such couples should have made a success of their marriages is very striking. It is equally striking to discover that it is among those very persons who had opportunity for some sort of experimental marriage that the divorce rate is highest. The Lamhada boy, as we see later in this chapter, spends his whole time with his future wife, working with her in the fields and in the house; ghotul mates in the *jodidār* dormitories do not usually share the same home, but they too spend a great deal of time together during the day and sleep together every night—often for five, six or seven years.

These figures throw some light on a problem which has been debated by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck and Briffault among others—whether the happiest marriages are between those who have grown up together or who have met later in life as strangers; a question which, if it could be settled, might throw some light on the origins of exogamy and the reason for the hostility to incest. 000

'Generally speaking,' says Westermarck, 'there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings between persons living very closely together from childhood. Nay more, in this, as in many other cases, sexual indifference is combined with the positive feeling of aversion when the act is thought of. This I take to be the fundamental cause of the exogamous prohibitions.' This 'sexual indifference to housemates' he illustrates by an interesting communication from the headmistress of a co-educational school in Finland. 'One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their schoolfellow; and I heard of a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other, "real", girls, as he called them.'[1]

Westermarck quotes the important passage from Havelock Ellis,[2] which I have already used in another connexion, to the effect that 'the normal failure of the pairing instinct to manifest itself in the case of brothers and sisters, or of boys and girls brought up together from infancy, is a merely negative phenomenon due to the inevitable absence under those circumstances of the conditions which evoke the pairing impulse.... Between those who have been brought up together from childhood all the sensory stimuli of vision, hearing and touch have been dulled by use, trained to the calm level of affection, and deprived of their potency to arouse the erethistic excitement which produces sexual tumescence.'

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[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 192ff.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection in Man*, p. 203.

Briffault, however, contends that this is to confound the mating instinct with the sexual impulse.[1] I do not often find myself in agreement with Briffault, but on this point he so exactly expresses the Muria's opinion that I must quote him in full. He points out that the mating instinct has its chief foundation in habitual association (the Muria would say that at least it is not checked by such association) and 'a man's female companion of childhood quite often becomes his wife'. Love between associates of childhood has been the theme of countless romances, from *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, to *Paul et Virginie* and *Locksley Hall*.

> The psychological facts which have given rise to the notion that common upbringing is unfavourable to sexual attraction are that in relations with companions of the other sex, especially if established before the awakening of the sexual instincts, the sentiment of affection such as is created by use and wont, preponderates over the male sexual instincts, and that the two impulses are, as has been seen, antagonistic. The companion who is regarded with pure affection as part of one's habitual surroundings is thus less liable to become an object of simple sexual desire than the stranger. She is loved and married from affection and established companionship, and the masculine impulse is a superadded ingredient only of the sentiment with which she is regarded. These unions are hence viewed, not only without any suggestion of horror, but as the most desirable and suitable. And such, in fact, they are, for it is on companionship and affection, and not on sexual desire, that the success of permanent sexual association depends; and that association to be permanently possible must arise, in the first instance, from such companionship and not, as the theories of Dr Ellis and Dr Westermarck would demand, from 'erethism'. The mating instinct, where it exists in animals as well as in human beings, depends precisely upon the checking and subordination of the male's sexual impulse by the tenderness that is derivative of maternal instincts and which is both the cause and the effect of association.

Both sides make many references to primitive cultures, where as usual their arguments are weightier than their authorities, and to the behaviour of animals, stallions, buck-rabbits, mallards and even seals. I cannot resist reproducing Westermarck's quotation from Montaigne. 'I was fain to turn out into the paddock an old stallion, as he was not to be governed when he smelt a mare: the facility presently sated him as towards his own, but towards strange mares, and the first that passed by the pale of his pasture, he would again fall to his importunate neighing and his furious heats as before.'[2]

The Muria, just like the stallion and the buck-rabbit, and most of us, is excited by a new object of sexual attraction. A visiting chelik receives far more attention from the motiari than any of their regular boys; a new girl in the ghotul may for the time being threaten its solidarity. But this is nothing to do with the mating impulse which, for the Muria, is normally divorced from sexual desire or erethism. Westermarck's contentions explain the popularity of the modern ghotul where partners must frequently be changed; 00D Briffault's explain the success and stability of Muria marriage.

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[1] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 244ff.
[2] Montaigne, *Essays*, Book II, Chapter XV.

The Muria themselves do not seem even to consider the point, whether future wives and husbands should grow up together. If it is convenient, they allow it; but they arrange their marriages on family and economic considerations. If a man wants to marry his son to his sister's daughter or to his wife's brother's daughter, as in the great majority of cases he does, he will not stop to consider whether the girl lives next door or beyond a mountain range; he will get down to the business side of the betrothal as soon as possible before anyone else can get in before him.

But there can be no doubt that the Muria recognizes the psychological danger of allowing a betrothed couple to get to know each other too well before marriage. He therefore imposes the strictest taboos on their behaviour towards each other with, as we have seen, the happiest results.

Where a future husband and wife live together in the same ghotul, they must have nothing whatever to do with one another. The girl must not comb the boy's hair or massage him; she must not, of course, sleep with or near him; she must not even salute him with the Johar. She must not give him liquor from her own leaf-cup or hand him tobacco. In the more intimate dances, like the Hulki, she must not dance in his arms. When the chelik of Binjhli wanted to do something very risky and modern, they tied the Kapatdar and his betrothed girl together with a turban, put them down on a mat and retired to see what would happen. The engaged pair struggled free, and without speaking to each other went to sleep in opposite corners of the ghotul.

In the *jodidâr* ghotul, a boy and his betrothed are both 'married' to others, and in both types of dormitory have the fullest liberty to flirt and sleep as they will. In Masora I once watched Phirtu's betrothed massaging another boy and flirting outrageously with him. Phirtu was laughing at them. I said, 'Don't you mind?' 'Why should I?' he replied. 'I haven't any *haq* over her yet.' In Kanhargaon, the young motiari who was betrothed to the much older Sirdar played with so many chelik in his presence, kissing, hugging, fondling them, that he got disgusted and went out. But the others thought this was improper of him. 'She doesn't belong to him yet; why should he mind?'

The result of this curious ambivalent rule is apparently to increase desire. Once it is accepted that virginity is not even desirable in either wife or husband, the fact that they can watch each other and know everything that is going on does not rouse disgust but makes the partner all the more attractive and desired, more thrilling when at last possessed.

Is the rule of segregation kept? Not always. I have no statistics, but it is possible to say that almost everywhere there are stories of engaged couples who have slept together, caused scandal and eloped to ensure an early marriage.

But this is never with the idea of having some form of experimental union to discover whether they would really suit each other, still less with the idea of immobilizing the future partner from going to others before marriage. The great attraction of engaged couples for each other is a very simple matter: it is the fact that if there is a 'scandal', in other words if the girl becomes pregnant, it will not matter very much and there will be no fine. As usual, sex goes back to economics.

In that case, it may be asked, why was not the ghotul founded on this principle—that every chelik should pair off with his future wife, live with her till she conceived and then marry her? The answer to that has already been

000 given by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and our own statistics. It simply does not work.

Another curious problem is this—why should engaged couples elope together? It is not uncommon—again I have no statistics, but I know of a dozen cases—where chelik and motiari, who were in any case going to be married, have gone to all the trouble and danger of an elopement. Why is this? It is generally due to economic causes. When the parents keep on postponing a marriage on financial grounds, sometimes the boy and girl get tired of waiting and force their parents' hands. This may be done either by the boy making his future wife pregnant, or by simply eloping to some friendly ghotul and persuading the members there to celebrate the marriage. When this is done, nobody really minds very much; for a lot of money is saved, and the married pair are received, when they return, with the usual honours. Such adventures do not seem to ruin the later happiness of the home.

Crawley has explained a similar policy of segregation during the period from engagement to marriage among other peoples as a magical taboo.[1] 'The principle is to prevent all intercourse until the particular ceremonies which obviate the danger of the new relation, mutual contagion between two particular persons, have been performed, and to prepare them for these and for the new state of life—the taboo of avoidance being thought to be in itself some guarantee of future safety.....The young people are about to enter upon a critical state, that of living in more or less close contact with each other, and as that state derives its dangers from their reciprocal influence, a taboo is set between them until it is removed by the ceremony which united them while rendering them mutually innocuous.'

It may be so. But I have a growing conviction that many of our conclusions about the sex life of primitive peoples have been vitiated by the earlier investigators' assumption that aboriginals knew nothing of sexual technique, had no idea of romantic love, and based their actions, even the most intimate, on magical principles and fears. Modern research is rapidly destroying these premises and, certainly for the Muria, I believe that much which convention would ascribe to magic and religion should really be attributed to the tribe's remarkable knowledge of the psychology of sex.

The taboo between betrothed couples is thus seen to be entirely practical. It aims at preserving the mutual stimuli of vision and touch.[2] It is connected with the universal admiration for modesty, the general appeal of reticence. Even if a chelik's wife is not a virgin absolutely, she should at least be a virgin for him. Where this condition is fulfilled marriages are most happy, and the divorce rate is at its lowest.

III. 'A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ARRANGED'

x883 582 584 It is only by a breach of all rule and tradition that a chelik's motiari can be his wife. We have seen this happen in 77 cases out of 2000 with a comparatively high percentage of marital failures. In some other cases a chelik is forced by an unlucky pregnancy into a marriage with a girl to whom he was not officially betrothed; in a few other cases romantic passion leads to an elopement. But the great majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, or rather—since so many alliances are formed according to the relationship laws —by the voice of society and tradition. The figures are as follows— 883x 582 584

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[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Two proverbial sayings illustrate this. '*Duriha ke bâja wêh lâge*, the distant drum is sweet' and '*Durhe udya sudhâpan, najîk udya gindâpan*, the distant love is charming, the love at hand detestable.'

Number of—	Number	Percentage
Chelik marrying according to parents' wishes	1884	94·20
Cross-cousin marriages	1799	89·95
Divorces among arranged marriages ..	49	2·60
Irregular marriages	116	5·80
Marriages with ghotul partners ..	77	3·85
Marriages forced by pregnancy ..	26	1·30
Marriages by elopement on romantic grounds	13	0·65
Divorces among irregular marriages ..	10	8·62

The cross-cousin marriage is known as the *gudamol* or *gudapal*, the 'tribe-nest' or 'tribe-milk' marriage, and may be compared with the *dudh-lautāna* or 'bringing back the milk' of the Gond of the Central Provinces. Its popularity, to which the above figures abundantly testify, is not the least of the factors that bind the Muria as a tribe so close together. The *gudamol* is, of course, a marriage between a chelik and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or a motiari and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son. In its *kutiyāri* form, the cross-cousin marriage is extended to cover persons in the same general classificatory relationship as these but less closely related. What this means in practice is that when a family gives a girl to another family in one generation, it gets a girl back in return in the next generation. 883x 582

The advantage of this is manifest. The bride-price can be much lower. The clan-ancestors are satisfied—it will be remembered that when a girl leaves a clan at her marriage compensation must be put into the Pot of the Departed. Everything remains homely and familiar—there is the same set of *saga-samdhi*, there are no new relationships to be explored. Old-standing alliances are strengthened. Just as after death, steps are taken to ensure the return of the dead to his own family circle, so at marriage there is satisfaction at keeping the children within a certain range of families.

To the chelik and motiari subjected to this arrangement it appears less that their parents have settled their fate than that society itself has done so. The parents themselves must bow to tribal custom. This is, I think, important n view of the very strong hold of tribal custom and social solidarity upon the Muria, even upon the young Muria. Boys or girls may easily rebel against their parents; obscure complexes may well arouse in them dissatisfaction with anything their parents do; but they have a passionate devotion to the ribe. 'We love our laws', they say, 'and obey them far more readily than we obey the Government—for we made them ourselves.'

We should not therefore think of chelik and motiari as forced by some xternal influence into unions for which they have no desire; rather we may ay that as part of society they follow society's laws.

The mother's brother's son, though he must be avoided, becomes a figure f romance, stronger than the most handsome chelik to whom there is ready ccess. He is often mentioned in the ghotul songs.

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O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

x882
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In those cases where no *gudamol* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

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We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

Plate CXXXV

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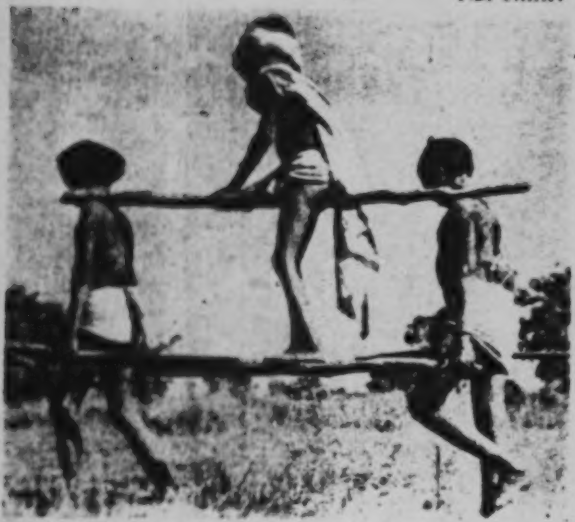
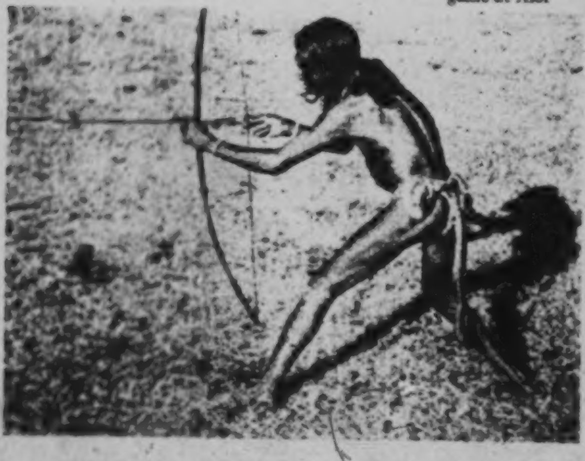


The Koda Karsana, or Horse game

An archer in a hunting
game at Alor



[p. 622 (A)]

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Plate CXXXVI

Shooting the bison
at Sidhawand

Bison-hunting at Alor

[p. 622 (B)]

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they are torn apart; they must never talk to each other again; each must change over to live, under conditions infinitely less romantic, with someone of whom they may know nothing.

Yet in the great majority of cases they do it, and believe it to be for the best. And statistics support them. A percentage of only 2·6 of marital failures among arranged marriages is very low.

But naturally there are disorders of this neat and tidy arrangement. Sooner than be married to another girl, some boys—from both types of ghotul—elope with their motiari. In Kabonga, the chelik said, 'If a boy does not run away with his motiari, he doesn't really love her'. A girl may slip away to the house of her lover and establish herself there for a *paisa mundi* wedding. 'A girl in love for the first time will walk even on a monkey's path', narrow, slippery and steep. She cares little for the opinion of her fellows. Such incidents are not very common—there were 116 irregular marriages among our 2000, of which 90 were elopements—but they occur. When the parents' hands are forced in this manner, they generally accept the situation. Compensation has to be paid to the girl's betrothed or, if she was not engaged, to her parents, and all is well.

In a case of pregnancy, if the girl does not run away, she is married to her betrothed—if he will have her, or to the boy responsible—whether he wants her or not, and a fine must be paid. Sometimes the pregnant girl runs away with her chelik and they get married in another village. There is always, however, an attempt to bring the lovers back. If there is no pregnancy and they are caught in time, they are fined and nothing more is said. If the girl is pregnant, and she is brought back, she must be offered to her betrothed, and it is a remarkable result of ghotul solidarity how often the boy accepts her and the responsibility for another's child.

The following incident is instructive:

> There were three brothers in the Garhbangal ghotul. The eldest made a girl pregnant; he was fined five rupees and she was married to her betrothed. Then the same boy made the same girl's younger sister pregnant. He consulted with his second brother and they persuaded their youngest brother to carry off the girl to another village and thus accept the responsibility for the pregnancy. The eldest brother did not want to be held capable of 'ruining' two girls, and he was moreover engaged to marry the landlord's daughter, whom he did not want to lose. But the youngest boy and the motiari were caught and brought back. The boy confessed the truth, and the eldest brother was fined seven rupees and the two others five rupees each. The girl was married to her betrothed. All three brothers are now happily married.

Sometimes parents who are very sympathetic decide that they will bear the fine and the bother, and allow a son to marry a girl he has made pregnant, if they are sure he really loves her, and there are no serious difficulties in the way. But generally, parents do not like to do this. At Binjhli, a girl was pregnant by a chelik to whom she was greatly devoted, but her father said, 'Why did you not tell me about this when I drank liquor for you on the betrothal day? I took gifts for you publicly, and now you would make me look down on the ground in shame'. At Nayanar too a father spoke in much the same way to a boy from Kulanar who made his daughter pregnant. 'How can I give her to you? You are a thief, though I know you love her and she loves you. But I have taken gifts and I have drunk liquor for another clan, and how can I change now?'

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This may sound hard, but unless parents insisted I doubt if the ghotul could continue. The orderly life of the tribe would be destroyed. After a betrothal a girl belongs already to her future husband's clan; she may attend his clan festivals and should avoid his, and not her own, totem. An engagement is not a mere contract between individuals; it is an alliance of families and clans, affecting even the Departed.

Serious difficulties are not common. Occasionally a man may have an experience like that of Kunjami Gudra of Chaniyagaon.

> While I was a little boy I was betrothed to a girl in Korpar village. Two years afterwards I went with the other chelik of Chaniyagaon to Jungani for the Pus Kolang dance. There I met the Nirosa of that ghotul, and fell in love with her. When she came with the other girls to dance the Diwali dances in our village, I was able to make love to her.
>
> Then I was married, but I did not care for my wife. Soon after the marriage I went to work at Jungani and stayed in the ghotul for some days. Now my love for the Nirosa grew much stronger. She told me she was betrothed to a boy in Gorma, but I persuaded her, and shortly after I returned home, she came to my house. I said, 'Why have you come?' She replied, 'For *paisa-mundi*, for money and a ring'.
>
> My first wife left me, but did her best to plague me with magic. One day she sent a black cobra to attack me. Another day as I was returning from the Dhanora bazaar—where my first wife lived—a tiger (sent by her) chased me up a tree. But with my second wife, I am living very happily.

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Out of the 20 suicides committed by Muria of the north during the past ten years only two were the result of parental interference in their children's love affairs. I have described one of these cases on page 416 and I will give the other here, for it is relevant to our discussion.

In 1933 Budha of Bayalpur arranged a marriage between his son Malsai and Ghasnin, the daughter of Kiti of Korhabera. They were both then young children. Each grew up in their separate ghotul, and Ghasnin began to accompany the older girls on the Diwali dances. The motiari of Korhabera go to Honawandi and the chelik of Honawandi go for the Dandar dances to Korhabera. Gradually Ghasnin herself became a leader of the motiari. In 1940 she became very friendly with Dawari of Honawandi, and they decided to marry. One evening Ghasnin begged her mother to allow this, but she refused. The next day, Ghasnin ran away to Honawandi and was married to Dawari that very night, the chelik and motiari of the ghotul there assisting at the wedding. Next morning, her elder brother arrived and angrily forced her to come home. On the way she escaped and ran through the jungle back to her husband. But her brother came again and forcibly took her home. Her parents decided to hand her over to the parents of Malsai, her betrothed. But because she was married and in love, and because Malsai was an undersized diseased boy, she was in despair. On the morning of 18 January 1941 she escaped from the house and drowned herself in the village tank.

In both these incidents, the sense of obligation to the official 'legal' partner is worthy of remark. Gudra had to quiet his conscience by persuading himself that his first wife was a witch; Ghasnin allowed herself to be taken from her husband's house, and seems to have accepted as inevitable her re-marriage to Malsai.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32.
Muria

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Hunting games

Plate CXXXVII

Preparing a human tiger at Pupgaon

Village jester shoots with a spade

A hunt at Phauda

[p.624(A)]

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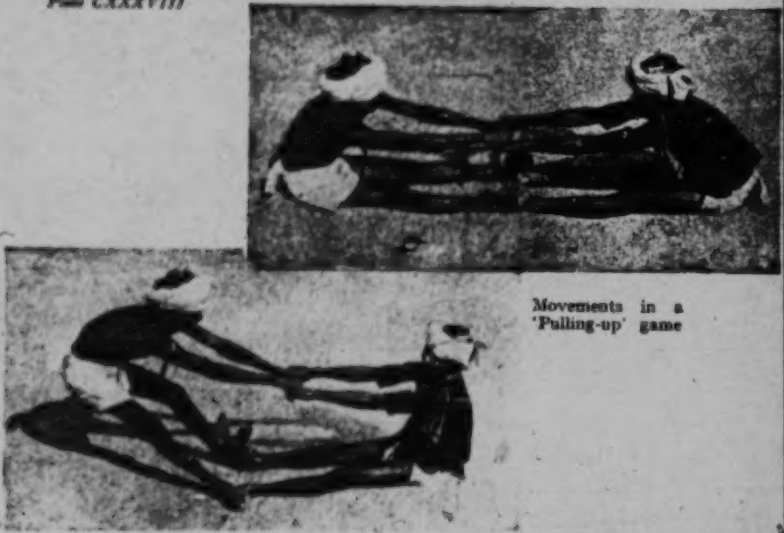
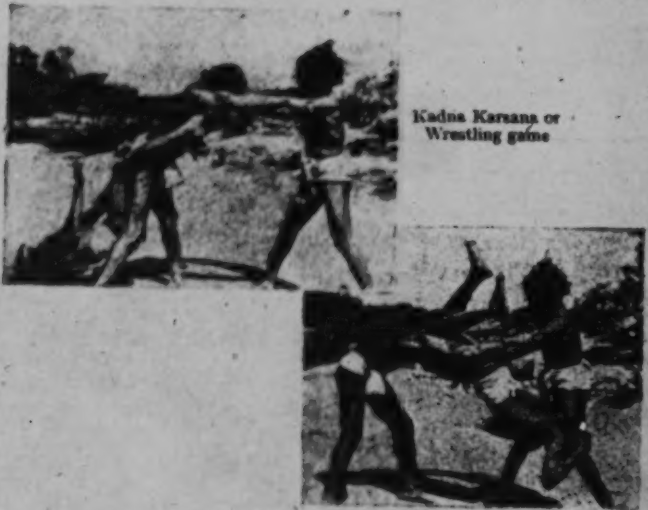
Plate CXXXVIII



Movements in a 'Pulling-up' game



Kadna Karsana or Wrestling game

[p.624(B)]

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Baipar-lad Karsana: bullock laden with sacks

Plate CXXXIX

Gadha Karsana

Mahamandal Karsana or Snake game

[p: 624 ©]

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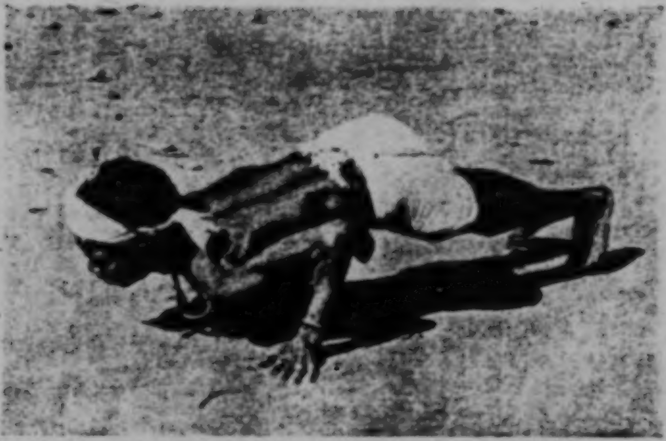
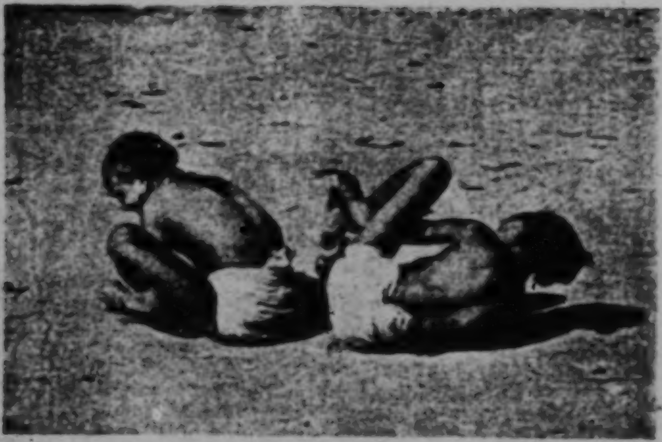
Plate CXL



Goibal Karsana,
or Lizard game

A cock-fighting game



[p. 624 (D)]

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

IV. MARRIAGE BY SERVICE

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One of the first to describe the custom of marriage by service in India was the Abbé Dubois who wrote that 'the expenses of a wedding are so considerable that in all castes one often sees young men, who are without the necessary means, using the same expedient to procure a wife that Jacob employed with Laban'.[1] 'Marriage by service must be distinguished from other customs which take a son-in-law to live in his wife's house. In all parts of India a youth may go to live with his parents-in-law either because the girl's family is well-to-do but without sons, or because it is poor and needs an extra man in the house, or because the son-in-law is poor and cannot pay the bride-price. The Coorgis allow a man who has no sons to give his daughter in marriage on the understanding that his son-in-law will remain with her in the house, and that any issue will belong to his family. Similar customs are reported from the Holeya of Bombay and the Kunnavan and Madiga of Madras, as well as from Assam, Kashmir and the Punjab. It is said that if a Santal or Uraon boy marries a girl without brothers and stays in his father-in-law's house and works for him till he dies, he will inherit the property.'[2]

Westermarck has distinguished between marriage by service as a regular form of marriage, which is preferred by the people because it gives an opportunity to test a youth's fitness, and marriage by service as a substitute for marriage by purchase.[3] Schmidt and Koppers have shown that the institution, 'functionally and culture-historically belonging to a matriarchal culture, has been transformed under patriarchal influence into the institution of paying the bride-price'.[4]

Marriage by service in Bastar means that a youth whose family cannot afford the bride-price comes to live in his father-in-law's house and works for him until he has earned his wife. He then marries her and either takes her to a house of his own or stays on with the parents-in-law. In the Madras Presidency the number of years' service required was seven; in the central India of today, it is generally not more than five and often only three. In the Punjab and the United Provinces it is normally three years. Here the practice is found among most Hindu castes, even Brahmins and Rajputs, and sometimes among Mussalmans. Youths who serve in this way are often despised, and a proverb is quoted from the United Provinces: *Kuta pāle, so kuta; sās ghar jamai aur bahin ghar bhai*—He who tames a dog is a dog; other dogs are those who live in a mother-in-law's house or where a sister is married.[5]

The chelik who goes to serve for his bride is called Lam or Lamhada in Gondi, Gharjiya in Halbi and Lamsena in Hindi.[6] In the Central Provinces

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[1] J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1928), p. 213. Nowadays many youths go instead to the tea gardens of Assam in order to earn sufficient to pay a bride-price; it would be an interesting subject for inquiry, to examine how far the Tea Districts Labour Association's recruitment has modified the institution of the 'serving marriage'.

[2] See *Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[3] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 366ff.

[4] O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, p. 147, quoting Schmidt and Koppers, *Volker und Kulturen* (Regensburg, 1924), pp. 270ff.

[5] *Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[6] For the institution in India generally see Ward, op. cit., p. 138 (for the Mandla District); *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part IIIB, p. 53 (for the Bhil); Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210 (Basor), Vol. III, p. 394 (Kawar), Vol. III, p. 550 (Korku), Vol. IV, p. 133 (Mahar), Vol. IV, p. 152 (Majhwar), Vol. IV, p. 166 (Mali). See also Ehrenfels, op. cit., p. 197; S. Hivale, *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley*, pp. 205ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 287f.

x883 he is sometimes known as the Gahania[1]—the boy who is in pawn. Elsewhere
883 in India he is called Ghar-jamai, Ghardi-jawae, Ghar-damând and Khâna-
583 damând—these expressions mean 'house-son-in-law'.

The Lamhada is betrothed to his girl in the ordinary way, and then comes to live in her father's house, where he is treated as one of the family. If he has been living hitherto in a different village, he has to leave the ghotul there and join the ghotul of which his future bride is a motiari. He will get a ghotul-wife or a temporary partner as the case may be and he will live with her at the same time that he serves for his betrothed. We thus have the interesting situation that if a Lamhada boy comes from another village to a place where there is a *jodidâr* ghotul, he gets two new girls—one his betrothed with whom he should have nothing to do, and the other his ghotul-wife with whom he will regularly cohabit.

The strongly equalitarian character of the Muria saves the institution of serving-marriage from certain obvious disadvantages. A boy is not looked down upon because he has no money. The capital that he brings to his new home is the strength of his arms, his industry and his enterprise. It is true that the hardest tasks are often given him, but these are to test his capacity and willingness to work rather than any token that he is regarded as inferior. His status in the ghotul is as good as any, and he is just as likely to become Sirdar or Kotwar as the son of the house where he is serving.

[522] But the Lamhada is a licensed subject for jesting. His close proximity to his future wife—in the same house, a definitely more 'risky' connexion than the closely disciplined relationship in the ghotul; his relations with his mother-in-law and other forbidden persons begun even before marriage; the heavy tasks and tests that are laid upon him; these are subjects for endless comment and amusement.

x883 In Dugabangal, the boys and girls sing a *Lâm dâyna pâta*, a song about
883 a boy going as a Lamhada.

583 Say Lamka Lamka, say son-in-law.
539 Hard is the work of the Lamka boy.
What is the plough made of?
The plough is made of the kosom tree.
What is the yoke made of?
The yoke is made of the siuna tree.
What is the pole made of?
The pole is made of the tinsa tree.
The bullocks are uncle and nephew;
The field is the field of the frogs;
The rice is black as the eyes of a queen.

In a Chitkul song of the Amoli ghotul, a girl is represented as chiding her father for not getting her married.

I am growing up like the beans in the garden,
Yet no one comes to marry me.
I am seven years mature, my father,
I am nearly old as you.
Yet if a boy comes to be Lamhada,
You show him the axe that weighs twelve *gana*;
You show him the basket of two hundred bamboos;
And he goes to find another girl.

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[1] In Betul Gondi he is called Lamjanal and the girl he is betrothed to is Lamjana-watar.—Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

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A cock-fight at Bayanar

Plate CXLI

[p. 626 (A)]

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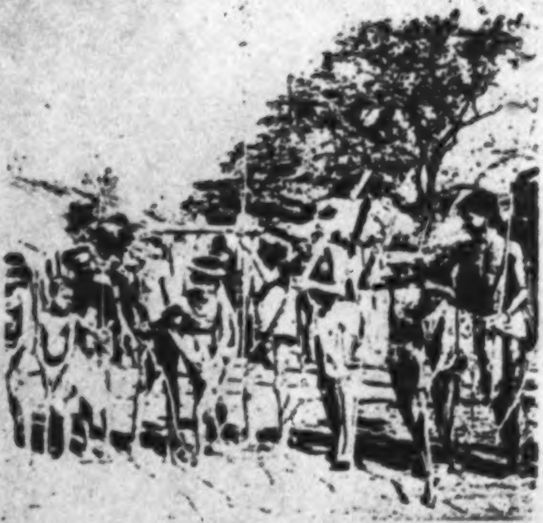

Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival

Plate CXLII

Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival

[p.626 (B)]

x883 583 An old woman at Masora spoke with great indignation about the way her mother treated the boy who served for her. 'She gave him the heaviest work, and she delayed our marriage as long as she could, for she wanted to get as much work out of him as possible.'

An interesting expression was used at Chandabera. 'A Lamhada is the *koryāri* (daughter-in-law), because he is brought to the house of his wife. Just as the mother-in-law usually abuses her son's wife, so now does the mother-in-law abuse her daughter's husband. He is the daughter-in-law and must do her work.'

x883 An adaptation of a familiar folk-tale motif describes the trials of a Lamhada and his final victory.

> 583 539 A father-in-law says to the Lamhada boy, 'Boy, go and sow sarson seed'. The boy goes and in the evening, the father says, 'Boy, go and bring it back, seed for seed, in the same measure'. The Lamhada goes weeping, for he loves the girl, and begins to pick up the seeds one by one. A pair of partridges come by and say, 'Boy, don't weep: we will gather it all for you'. By evening every grain is back in the measure.
>
> Then says the father, 'Boy, bring me five measures of ashes from hemp-waste'. The Lamhada collects a pile of waste and burns it, but the ashes go to nothing. At last he goes to his father-in-law and says, 'Without a knotless bamboo, I can do nothing'. The father searches on every hillside and at last returns. 'Boy, I am defeated'. The Lamhada says, 'But if I bring it, will you give me your daughter at once'? The father promises, and the Lamhada brings back a reed. 'Here is bamboo without a knot: give me your daughter.'

x883 584 What of the relations between the Lamhada and the girl with whom he is brought into such intimate contact? In the ghotul the same rules are supposed to apply as govern the conduct of other betrothed couples. The girl must strictly avoid her Lamhada; she must not salute him, nor comb his hair, nor massage him. She must not sleep with him, or sit on his mat. In his presence she will sleep regularly with other boys; he too will have his own partners. Yet neither may reproach the other, though they will be working together all day in the same house.

But although betrothed couples usually seem to observe these rules of avoidance fairly strictly, they are sometimes broken by the Lamhada. Several factors contribute to this. The boy and girl are brought into far more constant and intimate contact in kitchen, field and forest than ordinary engaged couples. A girl cannot help feeling that the Lamhada boy is already more or less married to her when she sees his relations with her parents, watches him already observing the special rules of jesting and avoidance with her other relatives; perhaps not a little sympathy is roused in her heart at the sight of the hard life he leads. Above all, if they do come together, and if she should become pregnant, nothing is easier than to perform their marriage—the boy concluding his term of service afterwards. When the Malik of Lohatur who was a Lamhada made his betrothed pregnant, they were not even fined, for the parents said, 'If it hadn't happened today, it would have happened tomorrow'.

Many cases of such 'irregularities' have been recorded. Dhani, the old Muria woman of Masora, had her affections strongly stirred by her mother's treatment of her Lamhada and she used to sleep with him in the ghotul. At Tarbaili, a girl was passionately devoted to her Lamhada; they used to slip out together at night into the forest—for at least they must preserve the conventions.

X 883
584

A former Kotwar of the Berma ghotul was Lamhada to the Dulosa; he made her pregnant, but as they were engaged, they were quickly married, though not without a fine of one rupee to the ghotul and three to the village. I also heard at Chargaon of a Lamhada who slept in the ghotul with his bride-to-be. In Lihagaon, a motiari went from the girls' ghotul to the boys' ghotul (for here they have separate establishments) and slept with her Lamhada; she was caught and they were punished.

In Palli (Kondagaon), I was told of two Lamhada; one was the Pahardar who was serving for the Dulosa, the other was the Chajen who was serving for the Tiloka. One day, they said with a good deal of amusement, the Tiloka said 'Johar' by mistake to her own Lamhada. Sometimes too she slept with him, but usually these two pairs divided—Pahardar and Tiloka and Chajen and Dulosa—and slept together in one corner. 'There could be no quarrel or jealousy; they are motiari, no one has a *haq* over them.'

A Kinnaring Pata glances at such relations.

How old is the Kinnaring girl?
She goes to bed in our house,
But she gets up with her Lamhada.
She eats and drinks in our house,
But she sleeps and rises with her Lamhada.

An interesting comment on these irregularities, and one which suggests that the rules governing the conduct of engaged couples were not made without reason, comes from Rengagondi. A former Munshi of the ghotul served as Lamhada for a girl, and often had intimate relations with her. She too petted him in the house and saw that he got good food and not too much work. But once they were married and went away to live together, she began to repulse him; she generally refused intercourse, and when he forced her, ran home to her parents.

To the Muria mind, however, the most important disorders of this arrangement are financial. Suppose the Lamhada turns out unsuitable: he does not work, he is a fool, he becomes diseased. He will have to be compensated for his wasted years. Suppose the girl elopes with someone else; the Lamhada has his just claims.

As far as I can tell, the Muria—in distinction to the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces—deal very fairly with these boys. If a man's daughter elopes before marriage, they see that her husband pays full compensation, anything up to fifty rupees, to the Lamhada. If the boy has to be turned out he is paid something, not perhaps very much, for such services as he has rendered. There was a significant incident at Pharasgaon.

> 'I served as a Lamhada for seven years', said Baiti, a Muria of about forty. 'Just as we were going to be married, my girl ran away with a chelik she had met during the Diwali dances. My father-in-law was a very good man, and he gave me his youngest daughter instead. She was much younger than I was, but I took her to my own home and we both went to live in the ghotul. Although we were to be married, she used to sleep with other boys and I with other girls. We never quarrelled about it. Now we have been married for years and always have been happy. I never went to her before marriage. Now she looks older than I do, but when we were married people laughed at me for taking such a young girl.'

This incident, which is the converse to what happened at Rengagondi, certainly suggests that it is best to keep the betrothal rules.

Another form of compensation was recorded at Modenar. Here there were 863x
two Lambada in the ghotul serving for two sisters; the Diwan was betrothed
to the Dulosa, the Likhen to the Jaimo. One day the Jaimo was found to 584
be pregnant by the Diwan; they went off together and were married and the
Dulosa was given to the Likhen in compensation.

The institution is not very common; it would be wrong, however, to call it unpopular. Out of our 2,000 cases, 113 were serving-marriages. Of these 93 were cross-cousin marriages, 40 *gudamol* and 53 *kutiyāri*. 13 had divorced their wives or been deserted by them, a rather high proportion of 11·5 per cent as compared with the divorce-rate of the whole tribe which is under 3 per cent. But the other 100 marriages were stated to have been happy enough. The majority of Muria, however, can generally find sufficient money to pay the small bride-price required—and after all, a son in your house is worth something—and the Muria love their children. Hence only 5·5 per cent of marriages are of this type.

V. POLYGYNY

A gentleman, talking to Samuel Johnson about France, told him that in 595
that country as soon as a man of fashion married, he took an opera girl as his mistress, declaring this to be the general custom. 'Pray sir,' said Johnson, 'How many opera girls may there be?' The gentleman answered, 'About four score'. 'Well then, sir,' replied Johnson, 'you see there can be no more than four score men of fashion who can do this.' Even if apocryphal, this rejoinder is relevant to any discussion of the prevalence of polygyny among primitive peoples. For this type of marriage is a simple matter of statistics.

Westermarck laboriously considers the geographical distribution of polygyny and then turns his attention to its prevalence in different grades of economic culture. Quite apart from the astonishing character of some of the witnesses whom he admits to his scientific court—for the aboriginals of central India he depends on Forsyth and Hislop (admirable in many respects, but how could they possibly have known the facts about Gond polygyny?), an article in the *Calcutta Review*, and the childish *Wild Tribes of India* by Rowney[1]—his entire argument is vitiated by one simple fact. In every primitive society, every woman must be married. There are no aboriginal spinsters. Widows may, and generally must, remarry. Widowers may remarry and usually do. There are no aboriginal concubines or prostitutes (outside certain professional tribes). Therefore the prevalence or otherwise of polygyny is conditioned largely by this one fact, the excess of the number of females over males. Thus Westermarck's statement that 'among pastoral peoples I have found none which can be regarded as strictly monogamous, and both among them and the higher agriculturalists polygyny is undoubtedly more frequent than among the hunters and incipient agriculturalists',[2] means nothing more, if it means anything at all, than that among hunters and incipient agriculturalists, there is a higher female mortality and no surplus women—which is what we would expect in view of the hard life lived at this stage of economic development.

In any society where there are more women than men, and where there are neither spinsters nor prostitutes, there must be some form of polygyny. This is so in Europe and in so-called 'higher' society everywhere, only there the plural wives are called mistresses and have no legal or other rights. The Muria is more honest and more just; he turns his mistress into a wife and accepts her children as his own.

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[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 8.

[2] Ibid, p. 26.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

595 161 The Census of 1931 showed that 'women generally preponderate in the more primitive tracts and men in the more advanced areas'. The aboriginal tribes have 'a high proportion of women'.[1] This was certainly true among Gond, Bharia, Binjhwar and Kawar in the Central Provinces, but the returns for the Maria and the Uraon show a lower figure for women. Here I suspect the accuracy of the returns, for there has often been a tendency among aboriginals to return lower figures of women on account of the curious suspicion that the Census inquiries are leading to a wholesale deportation of girls to England for the pleasure of the sahibs or, as I was once told, 'for the honour of Queen Victoria'.

In 1941, the figures for the chief aboriginal communities in Bastar were as follows.

	Males	Females	Total
Maria	60,015	60,095	120,110
Muria	109,512	110,142	219,654
Bhattra	5,471	5,398	10,869
Dorla	7,097	7,508	14,605
Dhurwa (incl. Parja) ..	13,208	12,611	25,819
Gond	8,344	8,276	16,620

My suspicion about the accuracy of the low returns for Maria women in 1931 is confirmed by the fact that 10 years later women outnumbered the men. Women also outnumber men among the Muria, but it must be remembered that at least 50,000 of those returning themselves as Muria were in reality Bison-horn Maria. When we turn to the Ghotul and Jhoria Muria we find another picture.

	Muria males	Muria females
Narayanpur Tahsil—North	8,390	7,975
West	691	631
South	8,647	7,833
Kondagaon Tahsil—North	16,596	16,550
South	17,049	16,506
Total ..	51,373	49,495

There is thus a deficit among the Ghotul Muria of 1,878 women, out of a rough total of 100,000, or 18 per 1,000. There is little scope, therefore, for polygynous enterprise, even though I again suspect that there are actually more women in the tribe than the Census returns admit. Wherever, as Census Officer, I was able to check returns, I found a tendency to conceal the real number of motiari.

595 In the 2,000 marriages examined, only 44 were or had been polygamous. Of these 29 men claimed that they had lived happily with two wives at a time, but 9 admitted that their experiment had not lasted very long. In 5 cases the first wife left the husband, in 4 the first wife succeeded in driving out the

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[1] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 151.

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bāploti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter than in my happiness. Soon I found I could not bear to sleep with her and I went back to the ghotul. There I fell in love with Buski and eloped with her and married her. Afterwards I felt sorry for my first wife, and simply out of kindness tried to sleep with her. In this way I lost all happiness, for they began to quarrel with each other, and with me.'

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[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Keempur had six wives; in Kerlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

A Saidar of Pharasgaon: 'I lent a man twenty rupees. When the time came for repayment he had nothing to give. So he told me to take his daughter instead. We all three live together very happily. I once beat my second wife for not working properly, but that was the only time we quarrelled.'

A Chalan of Kehalakot: 'I feel ready for a second wife now, but I don't want to be a dog.'

A Kamdar of Chandabera: 'We hear that two wives won't sleep together. But we Muria have always been together in the ghotul, and if a man has two wives, they are both content to sleep with him.'

A Pujari of Kachora: 'I was married to a much older girl and she was always abusing me for having such a small penis. I used to say, "Give it time to grow and all will be well". But she would take no notice and was always wandering about in search of something bigger. Later on I married three wives'—probably to restore the self-respect so deeply injured by his first wife.

A Saidar of Bargaon: 'I had no children from my first wife and she begged me to marry another girl. So I married a widow. We lived together very happily. I always slept with my first wife, and the second lay near by. I used to have intercourse with each of them on alternate days'.[1]

A Jolia of Malmeta: 'I have no children, and I want to marry a second wife. But I have no money to pay for one. I think about it day and night and feel very wretched.'

A Baidar of Bunagaon: 'I am a Siraha. One day some people brought me a girl for treatment. I could do nothing. So they said, "Take her as your second wife, and you will cure her". So I married her, and put on her finger a leaf-ring of aonra, and we have fought the gods together. By becoming my wife she has been cured.'

Surju of Kuntpadar: 'My first wife was barren, and she herself suggested that I should marry another. I did and slept with each alternately. Sometimes they quarrelled, but once the younger girl had a baby, they became great friends, and my elder wife is very fond of the child.'

Here we have many different reasons for polygyny—the desire for offspring, the repayment of a debt, the need to restore injured dignity, a love-affair. In one case the first wife urged her husband to take a second, but more often she employs all the resources of magic or intrigue to prevent her husband installing a junior partner. Chaitu of Chandabera described his experiences in this matter.

> A girl came one day to my village and I fell in love with her. I asked her to come to my house and she agreed. I immediately sent for liquor and invited the village elders to drink. At about midnight, while everyone was drinking outside, I suddenly felt that I must see

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[1] The tradition that both wives are to be treated as sexual equals is rooted in Hindu antiquity, as is shown by the admonition of Daksha to Soma for loving Rohini to the exclusion of the other twenty-six constellations. 'Behave in the same way towards all thy wives that a great guilt may not come on thee.' But Soma took no heed and was cursed to wax and wane continually. The *Kamasutra* also says, 'If a man has gathered many wives, let him be the same to all.'—J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 471.

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. 595 She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure.

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. 837 The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous.

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, 837 but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence 753 endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death.

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue 837 protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then 183

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[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (ibid., Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 485 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and
danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

x883 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off
with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon,
836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after
a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to
783 a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the
path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made
the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups
of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times
cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer
promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

x883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken
too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Marka-
836 bera. 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married
to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She
837 is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she
has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.'
'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at
first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures.
But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband or goes to a new one is not the point. What matters is that there should be no supernatural interference in the even course of the life of the tribe, and no hatred or division between its members.

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[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

The critical point of a divorce is the repayment of the bride-price. However firmly the old and new husbands may have been bound together by the ceremonies of purification and reconciliation, the old husband will not eat with the new till he gets his money. When he does, they all sit down and feast together at a meal which is also shared by the woman in dispute.

Divorce, however, is rare. The pattern of Muria life, the Muria's attitude to sex, the training of the young in the ghotul, leads generally to happy marriages. I have already given the figures for divorce, but I will tabulate them here.

Number of divorces among people who had	Number	Percentage to total number of relevant cases
Married girl in same ghotul	24	3·13
Married girl in different ghotul	35	2·83
Lived in a *jodidār* ghotul	27	3·75
Lived in a 'modern' ghotul	32	2·50
Married their betrothed	49	2·60
Married their ghotul-wives	9	11·68
Lived as Lamhada	13	11·50
Been forced into marriage by a pregnancy	..	..
Total number of divorces in irregular marriages	10	8·62

The reasons for divorce must also be tabulated, though a disappointingly arge number of informants failed to give details.

Reasons for divorce	Number
She ran away' (No reason given)	25
We quarrelled over work'	3
She did not like me'	1
She eloped from her parents' house before coming to me'	2
She was a bitch'	2
I was ill and she didn't like to stay with me'	1
We did not like each other'	2
Impotence	2
I could not satisfy her'—probably *ejaculatio praecox*	9
My elder wife could not stand it when I married a second	5
My elder wife drove out the second'	4
She was always going off to her parents' house'	1
She was a thief'	1
She was of bad character'	1

This table makes it clear that far from divorce depending on the whim of e husband, in the majority of cases it is the wife who takes action; at least

586 40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined [833] for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

593 The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. JEALOUSY

152 Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough; 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

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[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 302.

[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

to share: and each development, each advance on the part of mankind can be traced back to the opposite formula: ability to share'.[1] 152

The absence of jealousy among primitive people has often been noticed and Hartland has given a long list of tribes remarkable for this amiable trait. Since he connects it, however, with general promiscuity, indifference to the marriage tie and a fundamental belief that primitive man is incapable of real love, his study does not throw very much light on Muria conditions. Westermarck and Briffault have also each filled a chapter with rather dubious evidence on the subject from all parts of the world, which would have had greater value had there been an agreed definition of jealousy among their authorities.

As with the problem of pre-nuptial chastity, so with jealousy, our evidence is confused, contradictory and little of it would be admitted in a court of law. The result is that it is possible to produce equally imposing lists both of those peoples who are temperamentally jealous and of those who are not.

Even in Bastar two tribes living side by side present a notable contrast in this matter; the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Sukma are notorious for the violence of their jealous and suspicious temperament which fills the jail at Jagdalpur with homicides; the Muria are no less remarkable for an almost complete absence of this passion. I do not think it is possible to lay down a rule; doubtless some tribes are more attached to possession, dignity, prestige than others. Jealousy always has its roots in something else.

But what is so interesting about the Muria is that they recognize jealousy as a problem, accept it as a danger to marital happiness, and direct the education of their children towards eliminating it from their psychology.

The ghotul trains its members in a strict equality; on the whole, just as in a big family, it manages fairly successfully to laugh out of countenance dignity and prestige; it sets its face against possessiveness and the desire for the exclusive enjoyment of anything; it insists on things being shared. Even the *jodidār* ghotul, where girls are allotted to their partners in a fairly permanent relation, achieves this in no small measure; and the newer type succeeds in an unusual degree in eliminating jealousy. Undoubtedly, as I have said already, there is a very remarkable general diffused affection among the boys and girls. The sense of property and possession is certainly lessened; policemen have told me that they believe the small amount of crime in the north of Bastar is due to the fact that Muria children learn while still in the ghotul to share things with everybody else and not to grab them for themselves. As the chelik said at Ulera, 'There is equal love for all, just as in a family'. 883x 152 867

Naturally there will be moments of strain, particularly when there are a few boys and girls of outstanding physical attraction in the ghotul; yet sexual jealousy between boys is certainly lessened. An old Muria of Jaitpuri, recalling his ghotul days, said that there was a girl in the ghotul whom he loved very much. 'When she slept with other boys I used to feel a little jealous, but I said to myself, "This ghotul life is only for four days and in any case if I don't have her today, I'll have her tomorrow".' In the ghotul two friends will lie down with a girl between them, and sometimes—as at Sidhawand—a group of boys occupies a corner of the ghotul with a group of girls, every one of whom is shared among them. Several of my chelik friends have told me that they have slept again and again with every girl in the ghotul.

There are, of course, exceptions. Ghotul differ from one another, a few deviating widely from the classical model. The younger boys are sometimes jealous of their seniors; I have noticed this at Masora and Markabera. As 883x 152

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[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy', Forbath, op. cit., p. 359.

883 I have remarked elsewhere, the situation in the Binjhli ghotul at the end of
1940 was in many ways unique. Here was a large number of girls including
152 several between the ages of seventeen and twenty, and the tension was often rather acute between the drab-looking older girls, some of whom had had more than one abortion, and the fresh, bright, lovely, younger motiari. These naturally wanted to sleep with the younger and more attractive boys, but so also did the older girls. One of the younger girls told my wife how 'the older girls are always jealous of the young and beautiful motiari. Sometimes they catch hold of their hands and forcibly pull them away from the more handsome and amusing boys, saying, "I know you want to sleep with him, *bāplotia*, but you're not to. You go and sleep over there". And the younger girls have to go away, disappointed, to some other boy. There is a lot of hatred between beautiful motiari and the Belosa. The chelik can say nothing. A chelik must never ask a girl to sleep with him. The ghotul is ruled by girls.' I remember very vividly the tense atmosphere in this ghotul one Friday night (the night they sleep together) when the allotment of partners was going on.

Another girl said that when she was forced to sleep with a boy she disliked and saw some of the older girls lying down on the mat of her special friend, she would sometimes scream with temper and lie awake all night burning with jealousy.

The situation in the Binjhli ghotul at that particular time, however, was, I think, exceptional and I have not found anything to parallel it elsewhere. Generally the girls and boys live together very happily.

The ghotul system is well adapted to train both boys and girls in sexual self-confidence. Pathological jealousy is often due to a sort of psychic impotence; it is a symptom of self-mistrust and of dread that one is sexually or otherwise incompetent. 'Jealousy is the projection of one's own insufficiency upon the partner.' But chelik and motiari do not generally feel insufficient: their life is so full and happy, so supported by mutual love and admiration that they approach their life-partners with natural confidence that they can satisfy and thus possess them wholly.

Another possible reason why the Muria are so free from jealousy is the absence of homosexuality, the importance of which in this matter has been stressed by Stekel in an acute analysis.[1]

The ghotul attacks jealousy partly by its tradition that it is a passion unworthy of chelik or motiari, partly by a frank sexual communism, sometimes—as in the *jodidār* ghotul—by the opposite method of making infidelity so difficult and so condemned that no boy or girl need worry about their exclusive possession. But in every case I believe that the strong sense of ghotul solidarity is the most powerful agent against jealousy.

After marriage, the fellowship of the ghotul widens out into the fellowship
152 of the tribe. Sexual communism is no longer practised, but a great deal of the fear that Descartes noticed as a root of jealousy is eliminated by the strong social feeling against adultery; Muria simply do not commit this crime just as they do not commit the crime of theft, and therefore there is no need to fill one's mind with fears about the safety of one's possessions. Since love is not afraid, it is not possessive. Adultery is not only socially condemned, it is very dangerous; it casts a blight on the village, it ruins the ritual hunt, it diverts the fisherman from his catch, it brings wild beasts upon the cattle, and it causes the offenders to swell all over and perhaps even die. Social and supernatural sanctions alike make it unnecessary to be jealous.

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[1] Stekel, op. cit., pp. 360ff.

x 883
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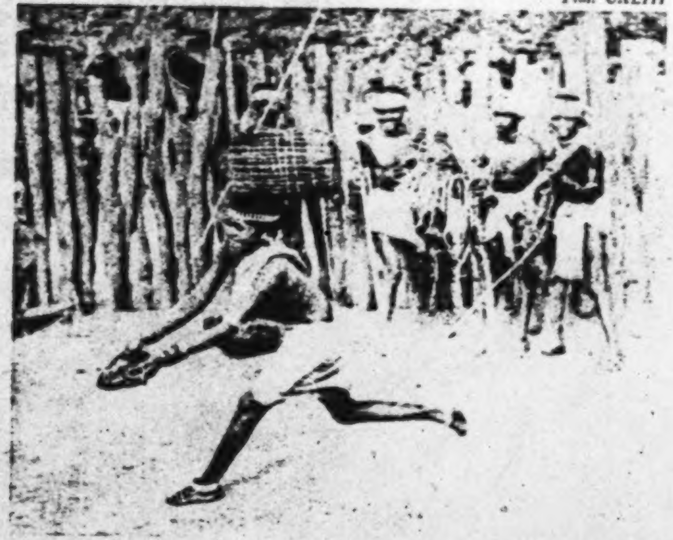
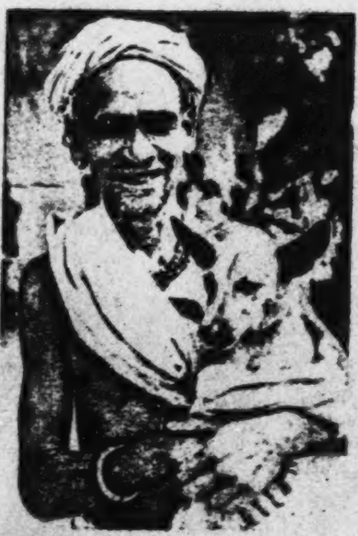
Plate CXLIII



A motiari throws water over the Kokoko dancers at Bandopal



Muria of Masora dancing with a dog in his arms

[p.638(A)]

Plate CXLIV

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Chelik of Nayanar squirts water at a motiari

Old people throw mud at each other at a Malakot wedding

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626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their saga-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 152 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 152 337 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the
Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband
who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not
837 sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times
on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
587 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that
152 she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows
whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it is as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. QUARRELS AND THEIR CAUSES

For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria
152 life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria
578 families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause
is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

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be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may 578
shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution 595
of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in
polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel 578
about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares
at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when 592
other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work
herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', 152
is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging
round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other 593
cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has
missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of 578
work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields;
his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting 152
her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly.. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasia's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

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[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Oraon tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

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for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bāri,
Tor mutka to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nahi mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; 593
all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when
I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When 578
you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains
and fever disappear at once'. 152

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *juddi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious conse-
quence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides 762
among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them 578
confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to
the following causes. 152

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

762 578 I will give a *few* case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lambada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

152 Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *masilotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Mussalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psycho-neurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1] [762]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry. 578 152

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Bahe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days. 578 152 674

Bahsi, a *former* Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Baraikot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers. 578 192

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

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[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sulengal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

578 The expression can be varied into *bāplotia* when it is applied to a girl, but this is less common.

192 Halbi terms of abuse, used by the Muria but not confined to them, are the usual *nakta* or *nakti*—'noseless', a reference to the habit of removing someone's nose as a penalty for adultery; *pachmār*, a girl who goes to five men; *julaha*, eater of the leavings of others, a thing forbidden by tribal law; and such words as *tolhi*, slacker, and *gadhi*, donkey. As in Chhattisgarh, references to the pubic hairs are common. 'You can't shave my pubic hairs', 'Can you pull out five of my pubic hairs?', 'Do you want to copulate with my hairs?' are expressions sufficiently insulting, but actually to pull out one or two of these hairs and throw them at an adversary is unforgivable.

The Muria can be very rude if he feels inclined—'Come and eat my penis'; 'Eat your mother's excreta'; 'Come and lick my plate'. *Gukhei* means 'eater of human excrement', *masaha* means 'a gluttonous eater of meat'. 'You have nothing in your own house, but run about licking others' plates.' The Muria are perhaps better at taunts than at abuse, a fact which explains the large number of taunt-songs which, sung amicably enough in the ghotul, equip the singers with weapons suitable for sterner business later on.

In Gondi almost the only abusive expressions have an incestuous reference. There are a few others, but I doubt if they are taken very seriously. I once heard a chelik say quite amiably to a motiari who had failed to clean the ghotul, '*Korha mon armi hatteke gallu ni pendāna jāhano*, A shed-full of buffaloes are scratching your privates'. And in the songs a not uncommon taunt is 'A jungle boar is rolling in your vagina'. I am told that a word *laria* is used with the same intention as the Chhattisgarhi *bhosri*, and means the penis. But more common is the simple *makka*—a hillman may call the people of the foothills *Jhoria-makka* or 'offspring of a lowlander's penis'; a conceited Raj Gond may be told that he is *Ganda-makka* or 'born of a Ganda', one of the despised weaving castes.

But these are rather unusual. When the Muria gets annoyed, he calls to mind the Table of Affinity and works through it, with special reference to forbidden relatives. Thus we get *niya āwān getha*, 'I will copulate with your mother', which is usually said by a man to his own son, or classificatory son, to his daughter or younger brother's daughter: and *niya didi na getha*, 'I will copulate with your elder sister', said by a man to his wife (the elder sister is, of course, in an 'avoidance' relationship).

To a sister's husband, a man may say *Niya ajin penda getha*, or 'I will copulate with your father's mother' and *Niya halena getha*, 'I will copulate with your sister'.

These expressions, it will be noted, do not suggest that the person abused has committed incest or any tribal offence. The speaker proclaims his own intention of doing so—suggesting, I suppose, that his enemy is too weak or too acquiescent to interfere.

Another formula, which can be used in a great many different ways, is a reference to the private parts of various relatives. The Muria go into this with some anatomical detail. They say, for example, *Niya miyar na penda* or 'Your daughter's vagina' but they can also refer to her clitoris—*Niya miyar na titi gutta*—or her *labia majora*, her urethra and her breasts. I am told that a man abuses his sister's son or daughter by reference to their daughter (who is in a forbidden relation to him), and his wife's brother's son by reference to his father's sister who is, of course, his own wife.

These references to one's own wife are the strangest feature of primitive abuse. Nothing rouses stronger passions; nothing—on the face of it—is

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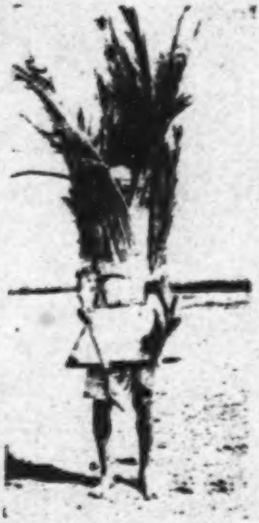
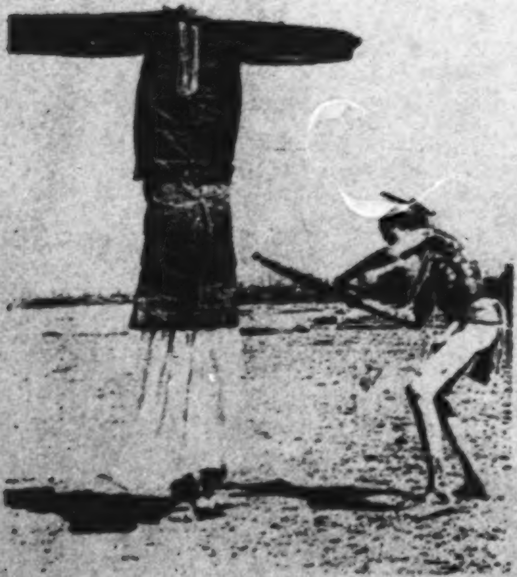
Plate CXLV

Dancer dressed in peacock's feathers





A dummy giant at Sidhawand

[p. 646 (A)]

Plate CXLVI

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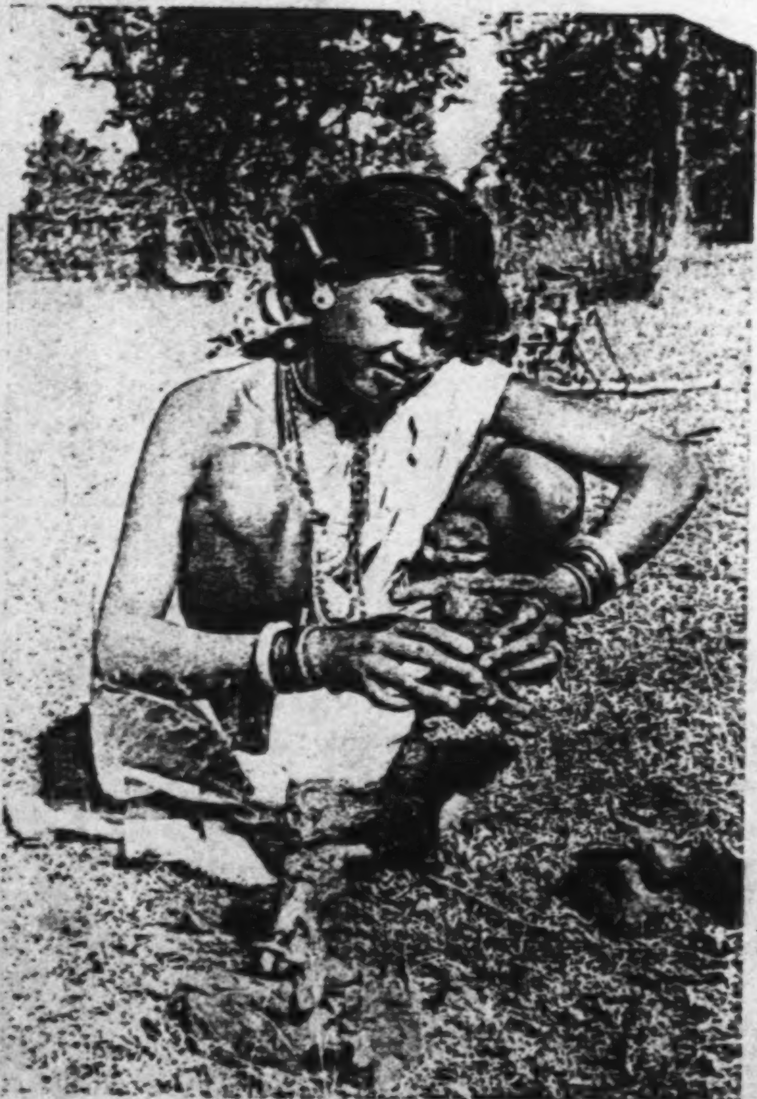

The Jhelo of Pupgaon with
earthen dolls and cattle

[p. 646 (B)]

more absurd. A father tells his son or daughter that he will copulate with their mother, an uncle tells his nephew that he will sleep with his aunt. And so he may. But he ought not to talk about it. 578 192

Such a vocabulary of abuse could only effect its object in a society where great stress was laid on family relationships and where the rules of those relationships are strictly observed. It is just because a man never does intrigue with a forbidden relation that the accusation becomes effective and even amusing. If a Muria thought it was really true, he would not say so; for he is a decent fellow, and even in his hottest moments does not want to cause trouble.

The most significant thing about this vocabulary is in its omissions. There are no religious oaths—for they would be too dangerous. There is no suggestion of unnatural offences—for they are practically unknown. There are no references to prostitution—for there are no Muria whores.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

X 883 THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds 796 excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion 828 of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and [785] fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

X 883 But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At 796 Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Danteshwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpu Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the

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[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', so C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 63.

village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some 883x
of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, 796
and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber 883x
for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut
at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. 796
In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the
seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two 241
days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the housewives. As they danced they sang.

Reka pindi kohko kohko.
Marka pindi kohko kohko.
Irpu pindi kohko kohko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Pude pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kohko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

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'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'. [187]

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pude!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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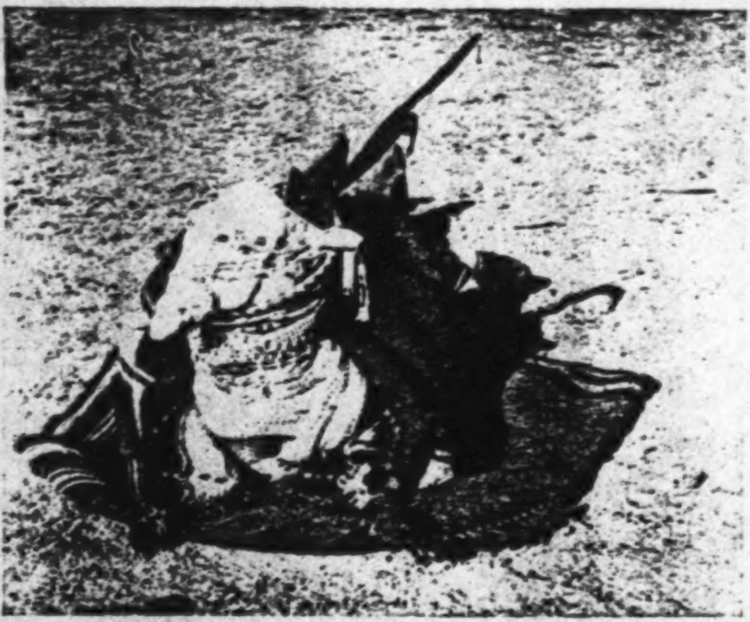
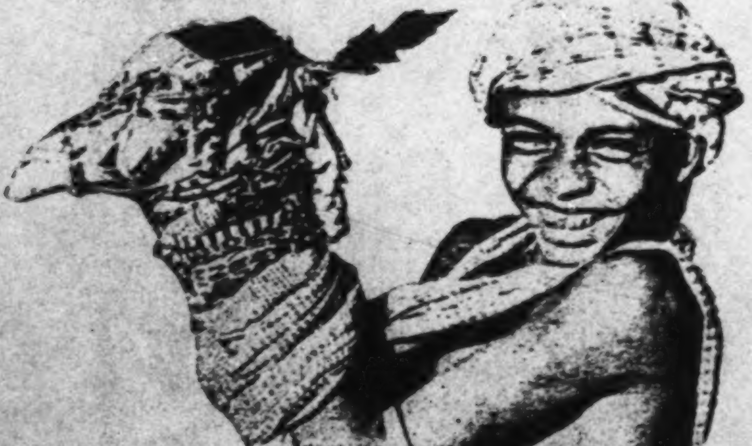
Plate CXLVII



A chelik at Phauda dressed up as a monstrous bird

The chelik reveals himself



[p. 650 (N)]

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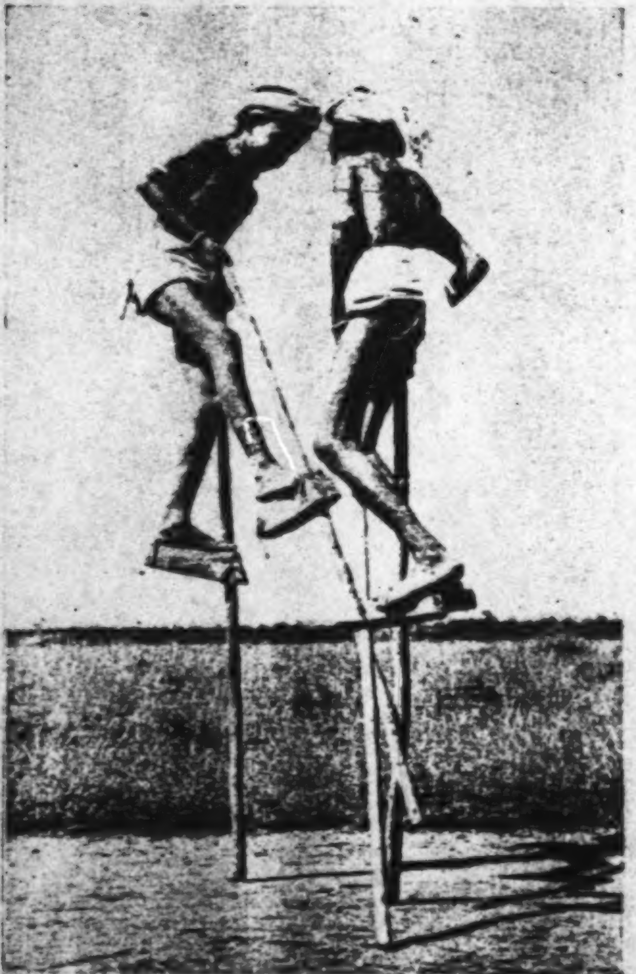
Plate CXLVIII



Stilt-fighting

[p.650 (B)]

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. THE STILT FESTIVAL

The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow. 885x 481 796

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2] 5

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6′ high, to which foot-rests are attached 2′ from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground. [524]

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing.

Lĕya dĕya loo loom thi,
Rai beda beda the
Nĕna daha dharthe,
Gandri bursundi pīra pīra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting you'. [539]

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[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 62. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspur District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 193.

[3] The Angami Naga, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 140.

X883 481 you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursandi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

796 Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the [787] eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

X883 796 There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

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[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 528. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 223.

[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1940), pp. 104ff.

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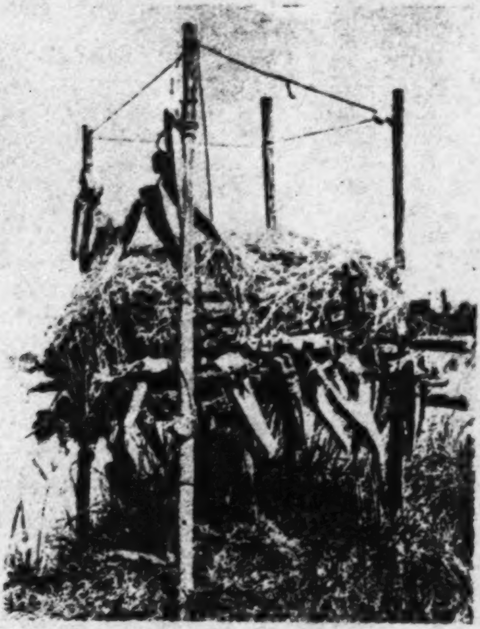
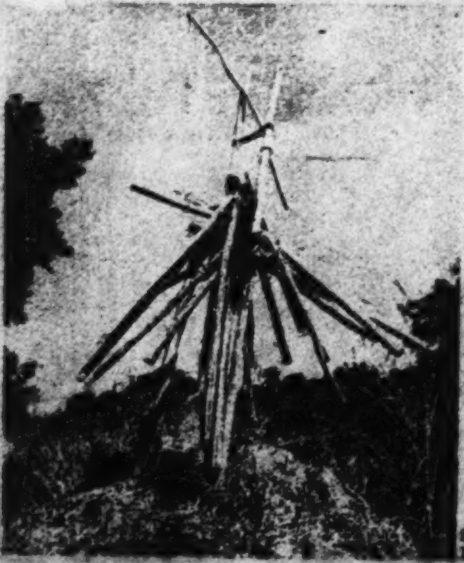
Stilts piled up outside
Phunder village

Plate CXLIX





Stilts piled up over
Dián Pen at Alur

[p. 652 (A)]

Plate CL

X883
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Ceremonial axe-cultivation:
preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

X 983 796 how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

X 883 869 A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

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THERE is little immorality in the ghotul. The outsider who looks on it as a place of unbridled licence and youthful corruption commits two errors, one of method and one of fact. His method of approach is wrong, for we cannot import our own ideas and standards into another culture and judge that culture by ours. But he is even wrong in point of fact. The ghotul is regulated by exact and far-reaching laws which are very generally obeyed. Its life, compared with the life of young people in other aboriginal villages, is marked by restraint rather than by excess.

Let us first consider the general standards of good and evil among the Muria. I have often discussed this question in the ghotul. 'The greatest sin', said a Muria in Markabera, 'is to injure someone by magic. It is very bad to hurt a man, specially an old man, with an axe. To kill cattle without cause is bad, but there is nothing wrong in sacrificing a bull or cow for a funeral or at a festival.' On the other hand, 'to give food to the hungry is a great virtue. If a man can't pay his rent, and there is a warrant for him, to save him is a great virtue. If a stranger comes from far away, and I entertain him in my house, that is a great virtue. If a man loses his way, to put him on the road again is a great virtue. If a man is rich and when we ask a loan he gives more than we ask and takes little interest, he is a good man. If a man is a Siraha and we ask his help, if he comes at once to help the sick, he is a good man. If a man is old and wise, and when we are in trouble he does not talk foolishly or reproach us, but gives sound advice, he is a good man.'

A quarrelsome and angry man is regarded as very bad. A gentle and kindly manner, freedom from bitterness and jealousy, generosity and open-handedness are qualities that are much admired. The late headman of Masora was regarded by many of his people as a sort of saint. 'He speaks kindly whether he is hot (drunk) or cold (sober). He speaks slowly to everyone. He has no enemies among his own folk, though he has many enemies among the *paik* (subordinate officials), for he always protects the poor from *begar* (forced labour). His greatest enemy is the Kotwar who would take work even from a corpse. But the headman never gets angry, never orders you about; when he wants you to do something, he talks as if he were requesting you to do it. He has often paid rent and fines for the poorest villagers from his own money. All the children run after him. He laughs and jokes with everyone and is nice even to the Ganda.' Anyone who has listened to an outsider, whether chaprasi or landlord or contractor, talking to Muria will appreciate the virtue of the saying, 'He speaks slowly to everyone'.

Another good man in Masora was Lakadu, a young man, very lovable. 'He never quarrels, but earns his living and remains quietly at home. We have never heard of a quarrel in his house. He is cool.' In Binjhli I was told that the most respected man in those parts was Dibin of Karlakha. He is admired for his wisdom. 'He knows all languages, all knowledge, all wisdom and how to share it. He understands what to do at a marriage, at a funeral, at a festival for the gods. He cannot quarrel. If he gets drunk he goes and lies down somewhere by himself, for fear he may speak roughly to someone. He has never stolen anything, or beaten anyone. He lives happily with his family.' Another man of the same type is Dandi Muria of Palki.

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

883X 577 In Kumtpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

883X 831 834 Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

883X 834 Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. [164] In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

X 883 834 It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupal Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

X 883 839 838 Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

X 883 831 So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

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[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbath, op. cit., p. 361.

[2] Ibid., p. 366.

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about 883X
together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are
Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his 831
motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a 177
Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations
of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent— 231
will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many
years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop 782
cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. 883X
The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded 577
bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had 883X
served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there
had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the 674
ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

x883 in the Mardapal Pargana and along the north-eastern border in just those areas where the dormitory system is moribund. 674 The ghotul has almost disappeared from the Mardapal Pargana, and the system is rapidly decaying along the border. A policeman told me that in his opinion ghotul-education was a most valuable preventative of crime, for boys and girls learnt to share everything and to scorn acquisitiveness and the lust of possession.

To lie and cheat is reprehensible, but does not seem to be taken very seriously. 577 It all depends on whom you are deceiving. It may well be a positive virtue to give an inquisitive ethnographer a false date for a ceremony or direct him to the wrong village when he wants to see a funeral. To break an oath or take a false oath is not so much an offence against morality as to do something very dangerous. In Binjhli I was told of a former Pargana Manjhi who stole a lot of rice during a famine. He was put on his trial, but took a powerful oath that he was innocent. As he walked out of the court, 'his eyes broke' and he became blind.

Muria ethics, therefore, combine a firm belief in taboos and the danger of breaking them, with a faith in the value of certain amiable and social virtues. The Muria are a closely knit tribe; as their culture is still living they are bound together by many ties. They therefore regard as most reprehensible those faults and crimes that would break the solidarity of the tribe—anger, jealousy, assault, adultery that leads to these things, the practice of magic that divides a community with hatred and suspicion, the breach of tribal laws of relationship which destroy its unity, and the breach of the laws of endogamy which destroy its integrity. Those virtues are most admired which bring men together in peace and happiness—a gentle tongue, an open hand and house, the love of wife and children, loyalty to tribal law.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look at the ghotul from our own Western standpoint, and try to assess the value of the Muria attitude to life and especially to sex not by their standards but by ours. It is not the business of the ethnographer to pass moral judgements, but he may perhaps imagine himself talking to a Christian missionary or a devout Hindu reformer, both of whom take so different a view to the Muria's, regarding sex as bad and dangerous in itself and any form of 'unchastity' as the worst of sins. Is there anything to be said for the Muria way of life?

In the first place it must be said that the chelik and motiari are wonderfully x883 happy. Their life is full, interesting, exciting, useful. The ghotul is, as they 861 often say, 'a little school'. The chelik are 'like Boy Scouts', as I was told in a village which had a troop in the local school. There is no comparison between these children and the sad-eyed, dirty ragamuffins of villages at a similar cultural level elsewhere. In the ghotul the children are taught lessons of cleanliness, discipline and hard work that remain with them throughout their lives. They are taught to take a pride in their appearance, to respect themselves and their elders; above all, they are taught the spirit of service. These boys and girls work very hard indeed for the public good. They are immediately available for the service of State officials or for work on the roads. They must be ready to work at a wedding or a funeral. They must attend to the drudgery of festivals. In most aboriginal villages of the Central Provinces the children are slack, dirty, undisciplined, and with no sense of public spirit. Even those who attend school generally only develop a strong desire to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows.

With all this our missionary and Hindu friends will be in agreement. 'But', they will say, 'that is not the point. Our complaint is that these youngsters sleep together.' It is at least one point in their favour that this sleeping together does not seem to do them a great deal of harm.[1] There are no signs of corruption or excess; these bright-eyed, merry-faced boys and girls do not give you the impression of being the victims of bestial lust. They are living a life of fulfilment and it seems to do them good.

They do sleep together, but—as we have seen—under conditions of discipline and some restraint. Children in other aboriginal villages also have sexual congress but without discipline and restraint. The aboriginal and semi-aboriginal boys whom I have known for the past ten years in the Mandla District all too often begin their sexual life before the age of twelve and indulge in it freely till they are married and after. It is notorious that venereal disease is rampant throughout aboriginal India, and some of the most pathetic sights I have seen have been cases of young boys and girls with syphilis. Reports from other parts do not suggest that customs vary greatly in this respect. I have no hesitation in saying that for the areas that I know intimately, there is more sexual excess among young people in ordinary villages than in ghotul villages.

Another interesting and curious point is that there are few people with a stronger sense of domestic morality and conjugal fidelity than the Muria. Adultery is very rare, and is visited with supernatural punishment when it does occur. You could not find happier or more united families. One of the reasons for this is that the ghotul system discourages the custom of child-marriage which is rapidly spreading through aboriginal India. Among romantically-minded people, child-marriage means, inevitably, domestic infidelity. Boys or girls find themselves tied to partners in whom they have no interest and naturally leave them and seek others. Another reason for this remarkable fidelity among the Muria is that in many ghotul boys and girls are 'married' and are taught the necessity of fidelity to their partners. In the other type of ghotul, they grow up from their earliest years to believe that though change is the mark of the unmarried, stability must characterize the married. Once a girl is in your *haq* or 'right' she must stay there and you must stay with her.

Now one of the great evils of semi-aboriginal India is domestic infidelity. Divorce is universal, elopement common, adultery an everyday affair. The ghotul villages have a much higher moral standard in this respect. Figures are startling. The incidence of divorce in Bastar is under 3 per cent. An examination of 50 marriages in Patangarh village in Mandla District showed 23 divorces or 46 per cent.[2]

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[1] 'This early promiscuous intercourse does not appear, as far as I can see, to affect those races prejudicially, many having a fine physique and contrasting as a rule favourably with the Aryan races of the plains.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong' in *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 248. Peal was for 26 years resident in east Assam. And Dr Clifford Allen in an important book published by the Oxford University Press says, 'It is essential for the health of the individual that normal sexual contacts should be made as early as possible. It should be noted that all savage tribes living in a state of nature encourage their young people to marry as soon as possible. . . . We have been told *ad nauseam* by cleric and moralist that continence does no harm to anyone; that the moral character is strengthened by abstinence and so on. This we do not believe. The sexual organs consist of gland and muscle co-ordinated with the nervous system. No other organs are improved by disuse, so why should these be exceptions? Again, the nervous system does not improve if some instinctual urge is obstructed, and indeed we know for certain that the obstruction of strong instinctual urges leads only to their breaking out in some abnormal channel, as when the starving man chews bits of wood and leather to allay his hunger. We believe the same is true for the erotic instincts.'—Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 167.

[2] See my article, 'The Duration of Marriage among the Aboriginals in the Maikal Hills', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII (1942), pp. 118.

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839 We may then consider how the ghotul boys and girls are almost completely free from those furtive and unpleasant vices that so mar our Western civilization. There is hardly any masturbation, the scourge of the English Public Schools; where it is practised, it is due to the mistaken efforts of reformers to improve the ghotul. Prostitution is unknown, unthinkable. No motiari has ever given her body for money. Homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality are shocking things, unworthy of chelik or motiari and never indulged by them. Nor does Muria society know the thin frustrated spinster or the male neurotic [157] so prolific in the modern Indian 'ashram', with his desiccated outlook and censorious judgements.

000 These are great gains. At the same time we must not forget that there are many things in our own society which would shock and offend the Muria. A chelik would be scandalized by the Public Schools in England—the atmosphere of competition, the corporal punishment, the bullying, the petty tyranny of senior boys, the segregation with its attendant vices, the common homosexual interests, the furtiveness of association with girls, the worship of sport which has no connexion with real life. The prostitution in our cities would seem to him an abomination, and he would be filled with pity for the unmarried together with a dread of what would happen to them after death.

He would find a wholesale disregard of right and proper taboos. The missionary probably kisses his mother and sister, and certainly allows his wife to cook and touch water during her menstrual period—things which would horrify the Muria. The Hindu is often criticized by the Muria for allowing his children to sleep in the same room as their parents, which the Muria thinks far more immoral than sending them to sleep with other children in the ghotul. The sanitary arrangements of many a Brahmin home offend the Muria and he considers the Hindu attitude to untouchables, widow-remarriage and purdah as unworthy and degrading. If he is reflective enough, he will equally insist that the Westerner whose civilization is characterized by all the anti-social vices, violence, jealousy, adultery, and war, is not in a position to criticize his quiet, peaceful, happy, useful ghotul.

Although observers of similar institutions in other cultures have generally been impressed by their virtues and social value, there have been exceptions. In an early work S. C. Roy called the Uraon dormitory an 'abomination',[1] though I believe his opinion altered later. Dalton thought that intercourse in a dormitory 'must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'.[2] In a very early account of the Seneca Indians of Canada, Cartier says, 'They have a very bad custom with their daughters, for as soon as they are of age to go to man, they put them in a bawdy-house, and abandon them to anyone who will take them, until they meet with a suitable party. And this we have seen by experience, for we saw those houses as full of girls as a school in France is full of children'.[3]

In the Marianne Islands, the missionaries found themselves opposed by the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* and, regarding only the sexual relations of the girls and boys, declared that '*le Démon a établi icy des Seminaires de débauche*', while another writer described the purpose of the Uritoi societies of Guam as '*un épicurisme grossier*'.[4]

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[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.

[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248.

[3] J. Cartier, *Brief récit de la navigation faict en MCDXXXV et MCDXXXVI*, first published in Paris in 1634. Quoted by Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 34.

[4] Quoted from Le Gobien, *Histoire des Iles Mariannes*, p. 61, and L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1826–44), Vol. II, p. 369 by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

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Equally ignorant of the real purpose of the village dormitory is the Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee of Orissa published in 1940. The Report refers to the Orissa dormitory in these elegant words: CCO

> We do not, however, like that the peculiar social institutions of the aborigines as a whole should be disturbed. It is to be left to themselves, if and when they are educated, to reform their own institutions. But we cannot lose sight of one institution, obtaining among the aborigines, which has a tendency to emasculate these people. This institution is called Dangri Idu. There are houses where boys and girls of one tribe are made to sleep at night separately, but in a body, specially in the Ganjam area. This leads to promiscuous intercourse, however. This should be discouraged. This is a social matter and propaganda should, therefore, be carried on against it, and the executive officers may also be asked to see that it is abolished by persuasion.[1]

This is the chaprasi's view of the dormitory, the sneaking sniggering opinion of Peeping Tom, a policy begotten by ignorance upon indecency. Those who have studied these institutions with intelligence and patience have reached a very different conclusion.

Thus C. von Fürer-Haimendorf writes of the *morung* of the Konyak Naga that they are the centres of village life and the pillars of their social and political organization. The *morung* system regulates the relations of every man and woman with the other members of the community, and forms a framework for the numerous mutual obligations between individuals and groups. It strengthens the sense of social unity, developing in the boys of a *morung* a strong *esprit de corps*, and at the same time encourages competition between the *morung*, thus stimulating the activities of the whole village. The rivalry between *morung* leads sometimes to serious quarrels, yet it is as a rule beneficial to the community.[2]

Of the *eravo* in British New Guinea, a writer in *Man* observes:

> The fully initiated native regards his *eravo* as his alma mater; all he knows of the past history of his tribe; his knowledge of his duties and obligations to his tribe and community; his contempt and dislike for all and everything opposed to the interests of his tribe and community; in brief, all that he is he owes to his *eravo*, and the teaching he received in it during his initiation will dominate his actions through life.[3]

Jenks had a good opinion of the Igorot dormitory.

> The life in the *olag* does not seem to weaken the boys or girls or cause them to degenerate, neither does it appear to make them vicious. Whereas there is practically no sense of modesty among the people, I have never seen anything lewd. Though there is no such thing as virtue, in the modern sense of the word, among the young people after puberty, children before puberty are said to be virtuous and the married woman is said always to be true to her husband.[4]

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[1] *Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee, Orissa* (Cuttack, 1940), p. 92.

[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas, Assam', in *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), p. 378.

[3] See *Man*, Vol. V (1905), p. 3.

[4] A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manila, 1905), p. 67.

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000 The *bahito*, the highly organized men's house of the Bororo of Brazil, has been described as 'a public school where the children are taught spinning, weaving, the manufacture of weapons, and above all singing'.[1]

Stack and Lyall deplore the fact that the boys' club—the *deka*—of the Mikir, which is such a 'useful form of co-operation', is falling into desuetude. Villagers like having *deka*, they say. They help greatly in cultivation, practise dancing and singing, and keep alive the village usages and tribal customs. They are in great request at funerals, which are the celebrations in which most spirit is shown.[2]

Parry speaks with approval of the discipline maintained in the Lushei dormitories. 'A young Lushei as soon as he is six or seven years old is no longer allowed to sleep in his father's house, but is sent off to the *zawlbuk* and becomes the fag of the older boys. Very strict discipline is maintained; the younger boys are obliged to work for the older, are taught to wrestle, are punished when disobedient, and generally are imbued with a sort of public school spirit, with excellent effect on their character in after-life.'[3]

He regrets the absence of the institution among the Lakher. To this fact he traces the lack of discipline in a Lakher village. 'A young Lakher when ordered to do something by an elder will argue, where a Lushei would obey at once . . . I ascribe much of the indiscipline among the Lakhers to the fact that they have no bachelors' house.'[4] Their morals also suffer. Bachelors do not sleep in their parents' houses, nor even, as among the Paithes, in the verandah of the chief's house, but in the house of the girl they happen to prefer at the moment. As soon as a boy reaches a certain age, 'he is no longer allowed to sleep in his parents' house, but is sent off to join the young men in some house where there are unmarried girls. This arrangement is not conducive to morality, and has the further disadvantage that the boys lose the disciplinary training of the bachelors' house'.[5] Mills also praises the *morung* discipline among the Ao Naga. For three years the boys 'have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system'.[6]

X 883 861 Indrajit Singh, a Hindu writer from the Central Provinces, in spite of some inaccuracies in his general account, well summarizes the function of the ghotul in Muria society:

> It is an institution that has manifold uses. It teaches social habits to the youths of both the sexes. It trains them in post-marital behaviour and makes them useful members of society. It inculcates a feeling of tribal discipline, provides a focus for the sentiments of the people and prepares the younger generation to discharge those social and economic obligations without which collective life of any kind can neither grow nor thrive.[7]

000 All external interference in tribal custom is risky: it is fatal when it is based on ignorance and prejudice. I have already quoted Mills' warning to the American Baptist Mission in Assam: 'In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had

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[1] V. Fric and Paul Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', in *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 388.
[2] E. Stack and C. J. Lyall, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), p. 12.
[3] N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 28
[4] Ibid., p. 28.
[5] Ibid., p. 247.
[6] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 180.
[7] Indrajit Singh, *The Gondwana and the Gonds* (Lucknow, 1944), p. 72.

considered the psychological aspect of the matter.' The *morung*, in Mills' 000 view, takes the place of the father as a disciplinarian and thus relieves for the Naga one of the 'great stresses of the family complex'.[1] 'It is unfortunate', says J. H. Hutton, 'that the change of faith which attends missionary effort should lead to the abandonment of art in wood-carving, dancing, song (hymns, of course, excepted), and ornament, while even more serious perhaps in the Assam Hills is the Christian opposition to the institution of the bachelors' house, where the male youths of the tribe are educated in the conduct and the traditions which enable them to live a life suited to their environment and to continue the social organization on which the communal life of the village depends. The inevitable result is the disintegration of the village community and the sacrifice of communal to personal interests.'[2]

In Bastar, the ghotul may in years to come be threatened not so much by 883x missionaries as by well-meaning but rather unintelligent social reformers and politicians in a hurry. It is doubtful also how long this aboriginal fortress 177 will be able to hold out, not against true civilization, but against that parody of it which characterizes the low-caste non-aboriginal villages of the vicinity.

Even if the ghotul were something far less valuable, instead of being the focus of all that is most vital in Muria life, interference with it would be undesirable. Any who wish to 'improve' or 'uplift' such people as the Muria should consider the wise words of Henry Balfour:

> The decay of old customs too often involves for the [people] loss of pride and interest in themselves and their past traditions; virility gives way to listlessness and apathy, a state which is now recognized as one of the potent factors in promoting depopulation. The arbitrary suppression of all traditional customs, ceremonies, and dances . . . is a short-sighted and retrograde policy. It strikes at the root of practically the whole social structure of the people, and its effects are apt to prove disastrous.[3]

The village dormitory is a symptom of a certain stage of cultural develop- 000 ment. We ourselves consider that we have outgrown it; we may grow into it again. In the days when I shared the free and happy life of the Muria I used sometimes to wonder whether I was a hundred years behind the times or a hundred years ahead. I do not suggest that we should replace the Public Schools by ghotul and turn our own children into chelik and motiari, but I do suggest that there are elements in ghotul life and teaching which we should do well to ponder and that an infection of the Muria spirit would do few of us any harm.

The message of the ghotul—that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all that human love—and its physical expression—is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian. The ghotul is no Austro-asiatic alien in the Indian scene. Here is the atmosphere of the best old India; here is something of the life (though on a humble scale) portrayed at Ajanta; here is something (though now altogether human) of the Krishna legend and its ultimate significance; this is the same life, the same tradition that inspired the Pahari paintings. Of these paintings, Coomaraswamy, in a passage which might almost have been written about the ghotul, says,

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[1] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 49.
[2] J. H. Hutton, in *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 441.
[3] H. Balfour, Foreword to Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. xii.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

> Many will be drawn to Rajput art as much by sympathetic and ethical, as by aesthetic considerations. Such paintings must always ultimately appeal to those who are already attracted by Indian life and thought, and above all to those who realize that they form the last visual records of an order that is rapidly passing away, never to return. In any case, their ethos is unique; what Chinese art achieved for landscape is here accomplished for human love. Here, if never and nowhere else in the world, the Western Gates are opened wide. The arms of lovers are about each others' necks, eye meets eye, the whispering *sakhis* speak of nothing else but the course of Krishna's courtship, the very animals are spell-bound by the sound of Krishna's flute, and the elements stand still to hear the *rāgas* and *rāginis*. This art is only concerned with the realities of life, above all with passionate love-service, conceived as the means and symbol of all Union.[1]

India still tends to regard her primitive population as something to be regretted. This book may perhaps help to show that her hills and forests hold a rich human treasure, natural to her soil, part of her great culture, which she should not despise.

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[1] A. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1916), p. 7.

APPENDIXES

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[P. 665]
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APPENDIX ONE

CLASSIFIED LIST OF GHOTUL VILLAGES

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This Appendix gives a fairly complete list of ghotul-villages, so far as I was able to discover them during the Census operations of 1940-1; the figures in the third and fourth columns are those for chelik and motiari at that date. They were obtained through the revenue officials and in all the marked villages were carefully checked by members of my party. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the figures in the unmarked villages.

In order that the reader can see the extent of my inquiries, and the amount of research achieved or unavoidably omitted in any area, I have added to the list of ghotul the following information:

*** means that I myself have visited the ghotul or that I am intimately acquainted with its members. Two or more of my colleagues also have visited the place, and all information has been carefully checked. Those ghotul that I know better than others have their names printed in large type. The initials S.H. stand for Mr Shamrao Hivale.

** means that the village has been visited by two or more members of my party, and that I have reasonably full and confirmed knowledge of the ghotul and its affairs.

* means that the village has been visited by members of the party, but that I have only general information about it.

The letter 'J' in the second column means that the ghotul is of the older *jodidār* type; the letters 'AB' mean that it is of the *adal-badal* type where partners are changed.

Any future investigator should not rely too much on these notes. A ghotul which was large and flourishing in 1941 may have entirely changed its character by 1947. Boys and girls grow up and make a once dull ghotul interesting: others marry and deprive a formerly lively ghotul of its most prominent members.

THE KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Amrawati Pargana

A pargana to the extreme east of Kondagaon, lying in and round the Makri Reserved Forest. There are not many Muria villages and most of them are under Oriya or Bhattra influence.

	Darli	..	..	9	7
*	Gudasra	..	AB	10	8
	Gumri	..	..	7	7

Aonri Pargana

This pargana comprises villages scattered over the northern plateau to the east of the Keskal and Kongur Parganas. The ghotul are said to be of the *adal-badal* type, and the chelik dance the Mahua Dandar and not the Pus Kolang. Marriages are celebrated in the bride's house.

Aonri	..	..	18	15
Charbera	..	..	10	8
Herwakodo		..	7	4
Khetarpal		..	15	12
Kongera	..	..	8	6
Kosmi	..	..	10	9
Nawagarh		..	20	15
Nayamar	..	..	12	10

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Nirachhindli	..	15	11	
Palora ..	..	9	9	
Sawala ..	..	16	15	
Sonpur ..	..	8	7	

Bamni Pargana

A small pargana south-west of Kondagaon town, in the neighbourhood of the Golawand Reserved Forest.

*** Bamni ..	J	30	22	
* Borgaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Dhansuli ..	AB	9	9	
* Totar ..	AB	10	9	

Bangoli Pargana

The Bangoli Pargana consists of a few villages in the west-central area, adjoining the Narayanpur Tahsil. Chelik and motiari dress in almost Jhoria fashion.

** Banchapai	AB	10	9	
** Bangoli ..	AB	10	8	
*** CHIMRI ..	J	15	14	Camped here 21-3-41. Many small *kotokal* stones.
** Chiyanar ..	AB	10	9	
** Kehalakot..	AB	11	10	Met and talked with several boys in 1941.
** Morenga ..	J	18	14	

Chalka Pargana

This is one of the Jhoria Parganas, and its villages are friendly and attractive. It lies to the west of the tahsil, parallel to the Narayanpur-Chota Dongar road, which is only five miles away across low hills. The river Baordig runs through the pargana.

*** ADNAR ..	AB	14	12	An important religious centre. Camped here on 31-3-41 for festival described at pp. 218ff.
*** Alwar Jogi	AB	5	4	Camped here 30-3-41.
* Alwar Karati	J	7	5	
* Banagaon ..	AB	7	8	
* Barko ..	AB	8	8	
* Bawri ..	J	7	5	
*** BAYANAR ..	J	18	16	A pretty village under a hill, whereon are many shrines. Camped here in March, 1941.
** Cherang ..	J	10	9	
* Chichdongri	AB	12	11	
* Junganiban	AB	15	12	
*** KEJANG ..	AB	15	13	Very charming and interesting boys of whom I saw a lot at Bayanar and Telanga.
* Kongera ..	AB	8	7	
* Korobera ..	J	7	7	
* Maragaon ..	AB	10	10	
** Mungwal ..	AB	12	9	
*** NARIYA ..	AB	14	12	An interesting ghotul with friendly boys. Visited 22-3-41.
* Nugali ..	AB	9	7	
* Pala ..	AB	12	12	

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*** TEMRUGAON	J	13	14	On the banks of the Baordig. Camped 22–24-3-41.
*** Telanga ..	J	12	11	Visited 27-3-41. Saw a wedding and incident described on p. 521.
* Toram ..	J	9	7	

Hatiya Pargana

This pargana, whose name implies a 'bazaar' or civilized area, is a very large and scattered one, extending over the whole area north of Kondagaon. It includes Dongrigura only four miles from Kondagaon, and Sidhawand forty miles to the north. Generally the Pus Kolang and Diwali dances are not performed; marriages are at the bride's house; end the megalithic culture has practically disappeared.

*** ALOR ..	AB	72	58	Magnificent ghotul and dancing. S.H. visited on 17-4-41 and V.E. on 15-11-41. Pillar to Lingo Pen.
Arandi ..	..	20	24	
Baijanpuri	..	13	14	
Bail ..	..	10	10	
*** Bara Dongar	AB	7	6	Beautiful village with Hindu temples. Bazaar and school. Small Muria hamlet with ghotul. Visited in 1937 and several times afterwards.
* Barbatar ..	AB	15	12	
Bayalpur ..	..	7	6	
* Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*** BEHMA ..	J	23	17	Friendship begun on 12-11-40, other contacts on 3-7-3-41 and 1-3-12-41. Admirable headman and friendly children.
* Bhandarwandi	AB	13	12	
** Bhiragaon	J	10	10	
* Bhumka ..	AB	11	9	
*** Bisrampuri	AB	79	57	Visited on 7-11-40.
** Chandagaon	AB	10	11	
Chhindli ..	..	23	12	
Chichari ..	..	8	9	
* Chilpati ..	AB	23	22	
* Dariya ..	AB	5	6	
Deodongar	..	16	14	
Deohardali	..	9	8	
* Deokhargaon	AB	9	11	
Dondra ..	..	10	8	
*** DONGRIGURA	AB	17	16	Camped here with B. S. Guha 22-2-41. Guha took measurements of Muria here and in neighbouring villages.
Gare ..	..	16	14	
Guhaborand	..	9	8	
Halda ..	..	7	7	
Hatma ..	..	9	8	
Honawandi	..	9	6	
Jorahera ..	..	11	10	
Kaigaon ..	..	8	8	
** Karagaon ..	J	13	14	
* Kazmari ..	AB	8	4	
Khairawand	..	14	17	
Khalari ..	..	12	18	
* Khargaon	AB	21	15	
Kilra ..	..	8	8	

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** Kohkametta	J	9	7	
*** KOKORI ..	AB	15	14	Camped here 22–31-12-41. A good headman, but ghotul disturbed as result of scandal the previous year. Good boys' dancing.
* Korabargaon	J	6	7	
Kosahaduli	..	12	13	
Kumarbargaon	..	11	6	
Machhli ..	..	5	8	
*** MAGHEDA ..	AB	20	15	Delightful village near the Jeypore border. Visited 30-12-41.
* Manjhiborand	AB	13	11	
Manjhichera	..	21	19	
Masukokori	..	15	8	
Nalajhar ..	..	6	7	
Narna ..	..	8	5	
*** PALARI ..	J	26	23	Visited on 26-2-42 with B. S. Guha. Very friendly ghotul.
Parond ..	..	14	15	
Patla ..	..	8	5	
*** Pendrawand	AB	10	9	Visited 6-11-40.
Pitechuwa..	..	7	5	
* Pusapal ..	AB	8	6	
*** SIDHAWAND	AB	20	14	Visited 3-7-11-40 and 3-7-3 41 for a wedding. Many other contacts with chelik.
Siwnipal ..	..	10	8	
* Taragaon ..	J	9	8	
Tewsa ..	..	8	10	
** Themgaon ..	AB	10	8	
Toskopal ..	..	27	18	
*** ULERA ..	AB	21	16	Pretty village, visited 26-12-41, with excellent headman and large ghotul. Near Jeypore border. Falconry and fairly good dancing.
Undri ..	..	11	6	
Yeranga ..	..	27	30	

Keskal Pargana

The Keskal Pargana is fairly homogeneous, in the north-west corner of the tahail. Much of it is composed of the hills known as the Mari Hills on the edge of the plateau overlooking Kanker State. As always where external influence is strong the Muria here are suspicious and unfriendly. The chelik dance the Pus Kolang, know the legend of Lingo, but marriages are in the bride's house, and memorial menhirs are not erected.

*** Amgaon ..	J	20	15	Visited 7-11-40. Good dancing and games.
Ameguhan	..	5	7	
Badra ..	..	6	6	
* Batrali ..	AB	11	12	
Chikladih ..	..	8	9	
Harwel ..	..	12	10	
Jamgaon ..	..	6	6	
Khale Chandeli	..	15	12	
Kodobhat	..	8	7	
Kudalwahi	..	9	5	
Manikpur ..	..	12	13	
Matenga ..	..	16	12	

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** Mohpal ..	AB	10	9
* Salebhat ..	AB	12	9
* Sargipal ..	AB	7	8
Umradah ..	..	7	3
Uparmurmend	..	11	9

Kongur Pargana

This delightful pargana contains some of the most characteristic ghotul in the State. It lies between Bara Dongar to the east and the Bara Jhorian, Kolur, Baragaon and Benur Parganas to the west. As you move across it you leave

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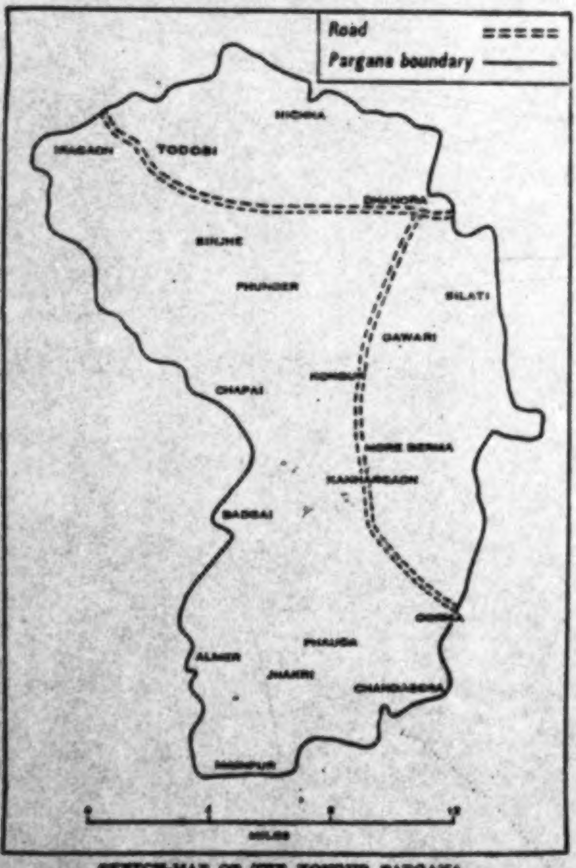

SKETCH-MAP OF THE KONGUR PARGANA

typical Kondagaon villages where the Chait Dandar is danced and the boys have little decoration, and come to as typical Jhoria villages, where the Lingo legend

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is known, the Pus Kolang and Diwali are danced, marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and a full megalithic culture survives. There is a range of pleasant hills in the east of the pargana.

*** Almer	AB	17	15	Visited 23-4-41.
Amgaon	..	9	8	
* Badgai	AB	23	25	
* Baniagaon	AB	10	9	
* Banjora	AB	10	5	
* Barda	AB	13	8	
** Bargaon	AB	23	17	
Barwar	..	11	12	
* Belgaon	AB	8	7	
* Bhatgaon	J	11	8	
Bhongapal	..	12	10	
*** BINJHE	AB	41	37	Camped here 10-12-41.
** Bokrabera	AB	22	19	
* Botha	J	9	7	
** Buiki Junganar	AB	15	13	
*** CHANDABERA	AB	24	17	Visited with S.H. 12-14-11-41. Admirable headman and ghotul.
*** Chaniyagaon	AB	34	23	
** Chapai	J	15	13	
Chhindlibera	..	9	9	
* Churegaon	AB	20	17	
* Daure	J	8	7	
* Deogaon	AB	12	9	
*** Dhanora	AB	20	28	Visited 11-12-41. Shrine of Kanda Dokara, Lingo's brother.
Dundaberma	..	11	9	
* Eragaon	AB	14	12	
* Gadar	AB	10	9	
** Gawari	AB	14	11	
*** GORMA	J	20	22	An important village. Saw funeral on 10-11-41. Camp from 7-12-11-41 with S.H.
Hichka	..	10	9	
* Iragaon	AB	9	7	
Jamgaon	..	7	8	
*** JHAKRI	AB	17	11	A fascinating village among hills. Friendly and informative ghotul. Visited with S.H. on 11-11-41.
* Kalepal	AB	8	6	
** Kanagaon	AB	18	16	
*** KANHARGAON	J	13	8	Camp here from 4-12-41 to 22-12-41. Most friendly and interesting.
* Karmari	AB	12	13	
Karraormetta	..	21	19	
* Kawagaon	AB	9	9	
** Khandsara	AB	9	9	
Khanlikurd	..	10	11	
Khawlikala	..	9	7	
* Kokarajunganar	AB	8	9	
* Kondapakhna	AB	7	8	
*** Kongur	AB	62	49	An important village, the headquarters of the pargana.
* Korgaon	AB	19	14	
* Korkoti	AB	10	10	
* Kotpar	J	8	6	
* Mainpur	AB	7	7	

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* Markara	AB	16	14	
Misri	..	6	5	
* More	AB	5	7	
*** MORE BERMA	J	24	21	One of the friendliest villages in Bastar. Adjoins Kanhargaon, where I camped 4-22-12-41.
* Net	AB	6	5	
* Oragaon	AB	7	7	
* Padde	AB	8	6	
** Palna	AB	10	8	
Parali	..	5	3	
** Pharasgaon	J	14	12	
*** PHAUDA	AB	20	15	Visited with S.H. 9-11-41. A large lively Jhoria village. Chelik danced at Dongrigura, 25-2-42.
*** PHUNDER	AB	45	39	Visited 8-12-41.
* Randhna	AB	13	9	
** Silati	AB	11	7	
Timri	..	11	9	
*** Todosi	AB	27	25	Visited 9-3-38 with S.H. A rather dull village.
* Torand	J	9	8	
* Toyapal	AB	6	5	
Turki	..	7	3	
Umla	..	10	10	
* Urandbera	AB	9	9	

Kopra Pargana

A small pargana east of the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, and a little north of Pharasgaon.

* Kopra	AB	27	21
* Korhobera	J	15	12
Kuldadih	..	6	5
Nawkabera	..	17	11.
* Taraibera	AB	16	15

Makri Pargana

This pargana lies north of the An[illegible] Pargana, in and around the Makri Reserved Forest and a forest reserve described by Grigson as 'a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India'.

*** Baghbera	AB	19	15	A pleasant village, with very friendly ghotul near the Jeypore border. Visited 28-12-41.
Khuri	..	8	5	
Labha	..	16	11	
Pirhapal	..	7	7	
*** RANDHNA	AB	21	18	A pretty place among hills. Megalithic substitutes. Legend of Usarengi Palli. Visited 30-12-41.
Sersa	AB	5	4	
** Sorma	AB	15	13	

Mardapal Pargana

A large pargana in the extreme south-west of the tahsil. Chota Dongar and the approach to the Abujhmar is only a few miles from its western boundary. It has

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the Golawand Forest on its eastern side and the Baordig river flows through it. Although it is a typical Jhoria pargana, the ghotul has almost entirely disappeared, probably through the influence of Raja Muria from Jagdalpur Tahsil which borders it. But chelik and motiari in full dress go to dance at marriages and festivals. They go as far as the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Marhai in the north and the Ghotpal Marhai in the south. All the intimacies of ghotul life appear to be preserved, even though the buildings have gone.

*** ESALNAR ..	AB	18	16	An important and interesting ghotul. Met the chelik and motiari of this and Rengagondi on several occasions. Since the establishment of the Golawand Forest Reserve, Esalnar has been placed in the Bhamni Pargana.
*** Rengagondi	J	18	15	

Sampur Pargana

A pargana with very scattered villages in the area to the north of Kondagaon.

* Athgaon ..	AB	6	9	
* Babai ..	AB	25	19	
* Badra ..	AB	8	9	
Balenga ..	..	22	19	
* Balond ..	AB	25	23	
Banskot ..	..	28	23	
*** BHANPURI	AB	21	18	Visited 31-10-41–2-11-41. A good village. Saw the 'Diwali Werk' and appointment of a Diwan.
* Bhiragaon	J	10	9	
Budra ..	..	14	13	
** Charkai ..	AB	25	19	
Chichari ..	..	12	15	
Gattipalna	..	10	3	
* Girola ..	AB	12	11	
Jarkongera	..	14	12	
*** Jungani ..	AB	27	19	Witnessed the boys and girls doing the Mahua Dandar on 2-4-41.
Kibaibalenga	..	10	7	
* Kokori ..	AB	24	19	
Kosagaon ..	..	4	3	
** Lihagaon ..	AB	31	31	
* Lubha ..	AB	8	7	
** Otenda ..	AB	34	29	
Pasangi ..	..	10	6	
Pirhapal ..	..	11	12	
** Rajpur ..	AB	20	18	
Satgaon ..	..	5	4	
*** Sirsi ..	AB	17	15	Saw the motiari dance the Diwali on 29-10-41.
*** SIRPUR ..	AB	18	23	Visited 28-30-10-41. Good stilt-walking and falconry.
Termunda	..	5	6	

Sonawal Pargana

A pargana with villages so widely scattered all over the tahsil that its name has no geographical significance.

*** Baniagaon	AB	38	33	Large mixed village on main road with school. Visited often.

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* Banjora ..	AB	9	8	
* Bapima ..	AB	9	9	
* Bhandarsioni	AB	42	38	
* Bunagaon	J	11	9	
* Chewrang	AB	12	14	
* Chema ..	AB	8	7	
* Chikalputi ..	AB	5	5	
*** Dahikonga	AB	20	16	Mixed village on main road; ghotul closed in 1941 by landlord's orders.
Gamri ..	..	7	5	
* Golawand	AB	9	8	
** Haddigaon	AB	14	13	
** Hangwar ..	AB	15	10	
*** HATHIPAKNA	AB	20	18	Met chelik on 5-11-41 when they danced magnificently.
*** Jaitpuri ..	AB	20	13	Frequent contacts.
* Jhara ..	AB	8	6	
*** KABONGA ..	AB	27	22	Camped 3-6-11-41 with S.H. One of the most interesting villages.
*** KACHORA ..	AB	12	10	Visited 9-11-3-41. A small ghotul but full of life and wonderful dancing.
** Kamera ..	AB	8	6	
* Karanji ..	J	14	12	
*** Kerawahi ..	AB	36	29	Interesting and informative people.
* Khandam	AB	12	11	
*** Kondagaon	AB	32	29	Ghotul in Jamkot Para. First visited in February 1935 with S.H. W Kaufmann recorded dance music here in February 1941.
* Kusma ..	J	11	9	
*** Lanjora ..	AB	63	56	Figures are for two hamlets. On main road. Bazaar. Visited in 1937 and 1940. My son, three weeks old, made his first acquaintance with the Muria at this camp.
*** MALAKOT ..	AB	27	21	Visited with S.H. 1-5-4-41. Saw two weddings. Lovely open scenery and nice people.
** Maranar ..	AB	19	15	
*** MASORA ..	AB	44	39	First visited by S.H. in March 1938. Made a small permanent camp here and used it as headquarters 1940-2 for Kondagaon Tahsil. Friendly, unspoilt, though on main road.
** Makonia ..	AB	21	16	
* Newta ..	AB	8	10	
*** PALLI ..	J	64	42	Visited by S.H. 6-4-41. Contacts also in 1942.
Permapal ..	J	12	11	
*** PIPRA ..	J	150	137	Figures are for several hamlets, one of which is Kuntpadar where I camped 11-13-11-40.
* Palang ..	AB	12	11	
** Pusarwand	AB	10	7	
** Rajagaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Sambalpur	AB	16	13	
* Singanpur	AB	27	25	
** Sonawal ..	AB	15	14	
Tikarwand ..	..	3	4	

THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

Amabera Pargana

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This pargana occupies the north-east corner of the tahsil. The countryside is hilly, wild and beautiful. The Lingo legend is known and the Pus Kolang dance performed everywhere, as we would expect seeing that this pargana is the scene of many of Lingo's exploits and his central shrine is at Semurgaon. Ghotul buildings here are draughty and uncomfortable, and the people, especially those near the Kanker border, suspicious and unfriendly.

Bara Teora	AB	8	7	
* Boragaon ..	AB	6	5	
* Changori ..	AB	21	19	
* Chichgaon	AB	8	7	
*** Chikhli ..	AB	18	16	A very dull ghotul. Visited 14-16-12-41, and was ill there, but witnessed an interesting elopement.
* Gergaon ..	AB	9	7	
** Kesarbera	AB	8	10	
* Kohchur ..	AB	5	4	
* Kolihari ..	AB	8	9	
*** Lohatar ..	AB	6	7	A mixed village with small ghotul.
* Matla ..	AB	5	5	
Nagarbera..	..	15	11	
Nilgundi ..	..	6	5	
Padargaon	..	10	11	
*** PENJORI ..	AB	17	15	Wild and beautiful village, visited 10-6-40. Good ghotul.
*** PUPGAON ..	AB	20	22	Visited 2-4-12-40.
* Pusaghati	AB	11	9	
Rajpur ..	..	8	7	
*** Semurgaon	AB	9	7	Visited 4-12-40. Shrine of Lingo Pen. Triennial festival.
* Tumasnar	AB	15	14	
Vetegaon ..	..	6	5	

Antagarh Pargana

Antagarh was formerly the headquarters of the tahsil, until Narayanpur supplanted it in 1940. The pargana runs along the northern boundary of the State. Ghotul customs are similar to those of Amabera, which adjoins Antagarh and is reached by a road descending over 1,000 feet down the Matlaghat. The Antagarh plain is only about 800 feet above sea level, the Chhattisgarhi language is popular and many ideas and customs of the lowlands are gradually invading this and the neighbouring parganas of the northern plain.

Bulawand	..	10	10	
Garda ..	..	8	7	
* Gawrekhasgaon	AB	19	17	
* Ghumsimunda	AB	9	7	
Godri ..	..	11	9	
* Gondbenapal	AB	18	16	
Himora ..	..	12	10	
* Hirribori ..	AB	8	9	
Jaitanawagaon	..	7	7	
*** Kalgaon ..	AB	14	17	
Kamta ..	..	13	12	
* [illegible]	AB	11	9	
*** KARIKHODRA	AB	24	23	A charming village three miles from Antagarh with a well-built and flour-

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ishing ghotul. Visited 9-6-40 and 4-12-40. The traditional scene of Lingo's final ordeal. Name means 'black hole'.

Kanrokhasgaon	..	7	8	
* Khorpani ..	AB	11	10	
* Konechur	AB	7	6	
* Koragaon ..	AB	10	10	
* Kotankhor	AB	11	12	
* Kulche ..	AB	5	5	
*** Lamkanar	AB	9	9	Visited 8-6-40.
Masbarar ..	..	14	13	
Nawagaon ..	..	8	8	
Paiwari ..	..	4	6	
Pondgaon	..	14	8	
Pungaon	..	7	6	
Sureli ..	..	10	10	
* Sore ..	AB	16	14	
* Temrupani	AB	11	12	
Topal ..	..	9	8	
Yetebalka	..	4	3	

Bamdadash Pargana

This pargana is in the extreme north-west corner of Bastar, and has Drug District on its northern boundary. It is difficult of access, and though the ghotul exists, I am told that the people have become shy and sensitive about it. There are said to be a few ghotul across the border in Drug.

Bargaon ..	..	15	13
Bara Kapsi	..	11	10
Chhindpal	..	8	8
Deora ..	..	6	7
Dhorkatta ..	..	10	10
Ergutta ..	..	7	6
Harangarh	..	10	11
Jugani ..	..	11	9
Murawandi	..	14	12
Marjhar ..	..	9	9
Palamureli	..	10	9
Pitobhondiya	..	18	16

Baragaon Pargana

This is one of the typical 'Jhoria' parganas. It is situated near the eastern border of the tahsil, immediately south of the Jhorian Pargana with the Kolar Forest Reserve to the west.

*** Amasara ..	J	15	10	Visited 12-4-41 for a marriage.
*** Borpal ..	J	25	23	Visited 11-4-41.
*** Deogaon ..	AB	17	15	Met chelik in December 1940.
*** Erka ..	AB	10	10	Visited several times in 1941.
*** Gawari ..	AB	19	18	Met chelik in March 1941.
Huchari ..	..	12	10	
Irko ..	..	6	4	
** Kanagaon	AB	14	14	
** Kharkagaon	AB	17	15	
*** Kharpal ..	AB	13	12	Met the chelik of this village several times during 1941.

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Muria

Benur Pargana

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A beautiful pargana on the eastern borders of the tahsil, by which the road from Kondagaon approaches Narayanpur. Here we are still on the high northern plateau, and the scenery is one of rugged hills and splendid forest. The ghotul are often carefully built and carved; chelik and motiari wear the full 'Jhoria' attire; memorial menhirs are erected. The Lingo legend is known and some villages dance the Pus Kolang; all send the motiari out for the Diwali dances.

*** Arpal ..	AB	16	12	Met chelik in December 1940.
Baghjhar ..	..	10	11	
*** Benur ..	AB	7	7	Formerly an important Muria village, it has now declined.
** Bhatpal ..	J	13	9	Many contacts in 1940.
* Borand ..	AB	9	8	
*** Chandagaon	AB	10	8	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Chhinari ..	AB	7	5	
* Dandwan ..	AB	5	4	
** Gohra ..	AB	13	12	
Gulumkodo	..	6	4	
*** Kalepal ..	AB	12	11	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Karhagaon	AB	8	9	
** Khargaon	AB	11	10	
** Koliyari ..	AB	14	12	
* Kulenar ..	AB	17	13	
** Kulhargaon	AB	14	12	
*** Malingnar	J	13	10	Visited 23-11-40.
Mandoki ..	..	11	9	
*** METAWAND	J	25	27	Visited with S.H. 13-18-12-40. Saw Pupal Korta Tindana and festival of clan-god on 15-12-40.
* Mundpal ..	J	9	6	
*** NAVANAR ..	AB	27	21	Visited 23-11-40, 12-14-4-41, and 26-4-41 with S.H.
** Netanar ..	J	9	8	
*** Panigaon ..	J	11	10	Met a number of chelik in December 1940.
*** REMAWAND	AB	17	16	Visited 21-24-11-40. Saw Diwali dancers from Markabera. Again visited with S.H., 25-4-41.
** Semapal ..	AB	14	12	
Sirpur ..	..	8	6	
*** Turtha ..	J	13	11	Met several chelik in December 1940
** Uridgaon ..	AB	9	8	

Bhanwa Pargana

This is really an Abujhmar Pargana, but there are Muria in some of the low-lying villages.

Chilperas ..	..	7	8
* Gundal ..	AB	8	6
Panidobri ..	..	13	12

Chota Dongar Pargana

The great Chota Dongar Pargana lies half way across the southern part of the tahsil. The bulk of it is in the Abujhmar Mountains and is inhabited by Hill Maria. The road from Chota Dongar to Orcha through the Marian gorge has magnificent scenery. The Muria here are undoubtedly Hill Maria who have settled in the less inaccessible villages of the pargana. A large assembly of chelik

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and motiari in dancing dress, such as I witnessed in Kongera, is an unforgettable sight.

*** Atargaon ..	J	28	19	Met many Muria from here on 6-2-41.
* Bargaon ..	AB	19	14	
Berma ..	..	8	6	
* Chameli ..	AB	9	7	
Dhanora ..	..	9	8	
* Durmi ..	AB	19	16	
** Gaurdand	J	14	12	
* Horenar ..	AB	12	11	
* Kanera ..	AB	24	21	
*** KONGERA ..	AB	50	45	Visited with W. Kaufmann 5-7-2-41.
** Kosalnar ..	AB	22	19	
* Kumari ..	J	18	18	
* Marbonar ..	AB	12	8	
* Palli ..	J	13	11	
*** Rajpur ..	J	12	9	Visited 6-2-41.
* Salga ..	AB	8	7	
*** Taragaon ..	J	18	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
* Temrugaon	J	9	9	
*** Toinar ..	AB	18	16	Many contacts in 1940-2.

Dugal Pargana

The Dugal Pargana, which lies north of Narayanpur town and across the road to Antagarh, has some flourishing ghotul of the Jhoria type, though those near Narayanpur itself like Binjhli and Palki have modified their ornamentation considerably.

** Aturbera ..	AB	15	12	
*** BINJHLI ..	AB	37	32	An important village, where I built a permanent camp. Stayed here with S.H. during November and December 1940 and often visited.
Birlyabera	..	9	7	
*** Dugabengal	J (now AB)	19	17	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*** Garhbengal	J (now AB)	22	19	Many contacts in 1940-1.
Kadakha ..	..	17	11	
** Karlapal ..	AB	9	6	
Khadingaon	..	12	10	
** Malika ..	AB	25	23	
*** PALKI ..	AB	31	28	Frequent visits in November and December 1940 with S.H.
* Solanga ..	J	11	10	

Jhorian Pargana

There were formerly two Jhorian Parganas, the Ghat Jhorian and the Bara Jhorian, but the bulk of the former was included in the Kolar or Matla Forest Reserve. The present Jhorian Pargana lies on the eastern border of the tahsil and opens onto the Kongur Pargana of Kondagaon, with the western villages of which it has much in common. The ghotul are well built, carving is common, chelik and motiari adorn themselves in Jhoria style and dance like Hill Maria but with many enrichments. The Lingo legend is popular, boys dance the Pus Kolang and girls the Diwali. Marriages are in the bridegroom's house. Menhirs are erected to the dead.

* Alnar ..	AB	12	10

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*** BANDOPAL	AB	27	21	Visited 28–30-11-40 and again with S.H. 22–25-4-41.
Bartanar ..	..	8	8	
Garda ..	..	5	4	
* Halainar ..	AB	6	5	
* Karmari ..	AB	7	5	
Kongera ..	..	8	4	
** Kursai ..	AB	12	11	
** Mule ..	J	12	9	
Palarmeta	..	4	3	
Pipra ..	..	3	2	
Royi ..	..	4	3	
Telanga ..	..	4	4	

Karangal Pargana

This pargana lies between Chota Dongar and Narayanpur. The chelik and motiari are of the Jhoria type and the customs throughout the pargana are similar to those described for the Jhorian Pargana, except that the cult of *Lingo* is weaker and only occasionally do the chelik go to dance the Deo Kolang. The motiari, however, dance the Diwali dances from village to village.

*** Amgaon ..	J	14	12	Visited with S.H. 10-12-40.
Bara Jamri	..	10	9	
* Baghdongri	AB	15	11	
*** Bakulwahi	J	29	27	Many contacts in 1940.
Bamni ..	..	27	20	
*** Bangal ..	J	14	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
* Bawri ..	J	7	6	
** Borand ..	J	9	8	
* Borgaon ..	AB	8	8	
* Deogaon ..	J	16	15	
Derdul ..	..	12	7	
Gotabeurur	..	5	3	
*** Halami Munjmeta	J	11	10	Met chelik on 12-12-40.
*** KAPSI ..	J	29	19	Visited 9-12-40; contacts in February 1941 and 1942.
* Karmari ..	AB	8	7	
** Kharkagaon	J	13	12	
Kochwahi	..	11	9	
* Kokori ..	J	10	6	
* Kukrajhor	AB	12	10	
** Kumli ..	J	16	13	
* Lalaubnar	AB	7	6	
* Malechur ..	J	9	8	
*** MARKABERA	J	16	17	Visited with S.H. 7–12-12-40; with W. Kaufmann 6-2-41; with B. S. Guha 28-2-42–2-3-42.
** Moroskodo	J	12	11	
Naumunmeta	..	6	7	
* Nelwar ..	J	9	8	
Sargipal ..	..	5	3	
* Siwni ..	AB	13	9	
* Tadopal ..	J	10	8	
*** Timnar ..	J	21	19	Many contacts during 1940–2.

Kalpatti Pargana

Kalpatti means 'lowlands' and this pargana is on the northern plain connecting with Chhattisgarh. Yet it has many links with the Hill Maria and the Abujhmar.

APPENDIX ONE

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Menhirs are erected, and the Pus Kolang is danced. The Lingo legend is known. Chhattisgarhi Hindi is generally spoken along with Gondi.

* Darwinalebhat	AB	13	12	
*** Jiramtarai	AB	14	10	Met the chelik and motiari on 26-1-41 at Koilibera.
* Kastura ..	AB	7	6	
* Kaurosalebhat	AB	11	10	
*** KHUTGAON	AB	16	13	Visited 27-28-1-41. Remarkable Muria landlord.
*** KOILIBERA	AB	23	21	Visited 25-26-1-41. Unforgettable river scenery. Saw Pus Kolang dance and ceremonies.
* Karsabori	AB	7	8	
* Maragaon ..	AB	13	12	
Masur ..	..	6	3	
* Murawandi	AB	8	5	
* Murnar ..	AB	7	7	
Nawge ..	..	3	2	
*** Partapur ..	AB	14	12	Visited 29-1-41, but have no detailed knowledge of ghotul.
Pipli ..	..	8	6	
* Salgi ..	AB	10	6	
* Tumsani ..	AB	15	9	

Kiringal Pargana

This interesting pargana belongs properly to the Abujhmar, and the Muria here are obviously Hill Maria who have come down from the heights. The women often go bare-breasted, and the ghotul—though allowing full membership to girls—is still the centre of the male life of the village.

*** Barkot ..	J	14	12	Visited 30-1-41. Charming wooded village and nice people.
Gheragaon	..	4	3	
Karekatta	..	7	4	
Khergaon	..	7	3	
Maspi ..	..	6	4	
*** PALLI ..	J	17	14	Visited 29-1-41. Well-built ghotul and good dancing.

Kolar Pargana

A large pargana lying between Antagarh and Narayanpur with much fine mountain scenery. The hills above the magnificent Raughat rise to 2,938 feet. The Abujhmar and Matlaghat hills join across the Pargana. Jhoria influence here is not very strong. The Pus Kolang is danced everywhere; menhirs are erected; marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house; the Lingo legend is known.

* Badangi ..	AB	18	16	
* Baihasalebhat	AB	18	15	
*** Bondanar ..	AB	15	13	Visited 7-6-40.
** Chingnar ..	AB	10	9	
Chiposi ..	..	12	11	
** Hoychur ..	AB	8	5	
** Hurtarai ..	AB	9	6	
Kachwar ..	..	16	12	
* Kasadand	AB	12	9	
** Khalepassa	AB	19	15	
*** Kolar ..	AB	8	6	A large mixed village. Visited 22-1-41.
Kurusi ..	..	4	2	
* Mahmetta	AB	18	17	
* Marnar ..	AB	8	7	

X883 *** Padbera ..	J	21	19	A friendly and beautiful village in the hills. Visited 19-12-41.
162 *** PHULPAR ..	AB	47	39	Visited 22-24-1-41. Saw Pus Kolang dancing.
361 * Pusawahi ..	AB	24	13	
** Sarandi ..	AB	25	21	
* Sirsangi ..	AB	10	10	
** Talabera ..	AB	15	12	
Taralkatta	..	12	11	
* Tumapal ..	AB	8	5	
Yeranar ..	..	15	13	

Narayanpur Pargana

A small pargana in the open country surrounding Narayanpur, the headquarters of the tahsil, where there are courts, a dispensary and school, and a very big bazaar to which come Hill Maria from the Abujhmar as well as large numbers of Jhoria Muria. I would not now call this a Jhoria pargana; external influence which first attacks externals has stripped the Muria of their delightful ornaments. The ghotul at Narayanpur is drab and rather corrupt.

* Garanji ..	AB	25	19	
*** Narayanpur	AB	34	31	Frequently visited with S.H. from 1937 to 1941.

Paralkot-Kalpatti Pargana

This pargana occupies the western end of the tahsil and includes the old zamindari of Paralkot. This is the gateway by which the influence of Chanda Hindus and Congressmen enters the State. The lovely Kotri river passes through the pargana and the hilly scenery on its eastern side which leads into the Abujhmar is attractive. Chelik and motiari on the east of the road and at Tarbeili are hardly to be distinguished from Hill Maria; the girls often go bare-breasted. But to the west, the people get more and more drab and uninteresting.

*** Betiya ..	AB	6	4	Visited 30-1-41–1-2-41.
Ghotanbera	..	11	9	
Irpanar ..	..	9	8	
Kanhargaon	..	8	7	
Karakoda	..	6	6	
* Kurunar ..	..	15	13	
* Markanar ..	..	9	9	
* Marora ..	..	12	11	
Mussamtola	..	10	10	
Nagaldand	..	11	10	
Parenga ..	..	7	8	
*** TARBAILI ..	..	13	13	A very attractive company came from this ghotul to dance at Betiya on 31-1-41.

Surewahi Pargana

This lies on the northern boundary of the State between the Antagarh and Khalpatti parganas, and is said to be very like them.

* Alkanhar ..	AB	16	14
* Amoli ..	AB	20	18
* Chargaon ..	AB	9	8
* Durpipli ..	AB	10	9
* Jathagaon	AB	9	5
* Maragaon ..	AB	14	12
* Nawagarh	AB	17	15
* Surewahi ..	AB	19	15

APPENDIX TWO

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MURIA

By A. N. Mitchell, O.B.E., I.C.S.

INTRODUCTORY

In the year 1940 when I was Administrator of Bastar, I began, at Dr Elwin's suggestion, a linguistic survey of the State. This survey was intended to be one of many subsidiary inquiries in connexion with the decennial Census, and it started from the assumption, which was then generally believed to be correct, that Bastar State was the home of a large number of different languages and dialects. It is still true to say that the number of languages spoken is remarkable in proportion to the area of the State, which is 13,725 square miles and may be roughly compared to that of Belgium. There is the official language, Hindi, and in the south of the State large numbers of people also speak Telugu. It is correct to say, however, that there are practically no people whose mother-tongue is Telugu, and very few with whom Hindi comes more easily than Halbi, which is probably the most commonly spoken language of all. This Halbi is in my opinion properly to be classified as a dialect of Marathi, but its vocabulary is a synthetic one of Gondi, Hindi, Oriya, and Marathi words.[1] It is not only the mother-tongue of the Halba, who traditionally accompanied the first Raja of Bastar when he fled into the State from Warangal early in the fifteenth century, but also of a number of semi-aboriginal castes such as the Bhattra and Dhakar, all of whom mainly inhabit the east central portion of the northern plateau. In addition there are many thousands of Muria who no longer speak anything but Halbi, while a minority of Muria, Jhoria, Maria, and Dorla all over the State have learnt it as a second language. The Dhurwa, who are mainly found in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the extreme north of the Sukma Zamindari, have a distinct dialect of their own, which is, however, recognizably related to other Gondi dialects. Finally there are a few scattered villages of Gadaba, mainly in the Jagdalpur Tahsil, who speak their own language, which belongs not to the Dravidian group as Gondi does, but to the Kolarian group of which few examples are normally to be found south of the Mahanadi river.

2. With the exception of Halbi, all these languages between them account for only a small proportion of the total population of the State, which now stands at about 650,000. The most interesting fact which emerged from my linguistic survey was that in a great arc running from the north-east corner of the State westwards, southwards and finally south east, a dialect of Gondi is spoken, which is for practical purposes one and the same dialect whether it is spoken by Muria, Jhoria, Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria, Koya, or Dorla. The number of speakers is probably about 300,000 out of a total population for the State of 650,000. For this reason and because the exigencies of service during war-time cut short my time in Bastar, I finally concentrated on this dialect, especially as spoken by the Bison-horn Maria, and produced a grammar thereof which was published at the Bastar State Press in 1942.

3. This amount of preliminary explanation is necessary before I proceed to give some account of the language of the Muria in order that two points may be made clear. The first is that the Maria language is essentially the same as that

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[1] Halbi, says Grierson, 'can hardly be called a true dialect. It is a mechanical mixture of bad Marathi, bad Oriya and bad Chhattisgarhi, which varies in the proportions of its constituents from place to place. On the whole Marathi inflexions form its most prominent feature'. It is the language of the Palace and used by clerks and others in Jagdalpur for public correspondence. Its use has now spread widely throughout Bastar where over 170,000 persons returned it as their mother-tongue in 1931.

of other Gond, or more properly Koitor, in Bastar State.[1] The second is that I have not been able to make as close a study of the language as spoken by the Muria as I have of that spoken by the Bison-horn and Hill Maria. This note should, therefore, not be taken as in any sense the last word on the subject, but rather as an illustrative introduction. One more reservation is necessary. I have mentioned above that many Muria can now only speak Halbi, and I would make this more clear by pointing out that no form of Gondi is now spoken in the areas enclosed on the north by the Makri river in Kondagaon Tahsil, on the west by the main road from Jagdalpur, and on the south by the Indrawati river from the eastern border of the State to the point where it is crossed at Jagdalpur by the main road. Even to the west of that road in an area about twenty miles in depth between Jagdalpur and Kondagaon the same remark applies. It is round this block that the arc to which I referred above is described.

4. This view of the essential unity of the dialect of Gondi spoken in Bastar State is not that which was held by Sir George Grierson in Volume IV of *The Linguistic Survey of India*. At page 532 thereof he stated that the Maria dialect of Bastar 'seems to be almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the (Chanda) district'. On page 473 also he expressed the opinion that Maria does not differ so much from ordinary Gondi that it should be classed as a separate dialect. When referring to the Gondi spoken in the north of the State, that is, by the Muria and Jhoria, he came to the conclusion that this was the same as that spoken by their neighbours to the north and west in Kanker State and the Drug and Chanda Districts of the Central Provinces. I believe both these views to be incorrect, and to be based on incorrect material supplied to him by the Bastar State authorities at the time. Among other reasons for this belief of mine I would place first the undoubtedly erroneous geography from which Grierson started. A comparison of what Dr Elwin has written in this book of the distribution of the Muria and Jhoria, and of what Mr W. V. Grigson has written in his *Maria Gonds of Bastar* regarding the distribution of the Maria, with what Grierson has written on the same subject, for example, at page 529 of Volume IV, will serve to prove this fact. On many points of grammatical detail, also, his information was undoubtedly wrong. In giving examples I adhere to my view that Muria and Maria Gondi are for practical purposes the same language. Grierson, then, at page 528 of Volume IV refers to the existence of separate forms of the dative and accusative cases. There are no such separate forms. The personal terminations of verbs are not the same in Bastar as those mentioned by Grierson on pages 528-9 and 533. The personal pronouns mentioned on page 532 are not identical with those which he, erroneously, says are used in the Gondi of the north of the State. There is no negative infinitive as stated by him (p. 533). There is no passive voice, which he states to exist generally in Gondi (p. 482). On page 473 he has admitted the existence of typical southern features in the language spoken by the Muria when he mentions the use of initial 'l' for 'r' and 'h' for 's'. On the same page he speaks of the form *ana* = 'I' being used among Muria as among Gond elsewhere, but I have not heard anything but the form *nana*. His citation of the words *dana* or *danva* meaning 'her' also appears incorrect. I have heard *tana* among Maria, but *dana* appears to be a simple transposition of consonants for *adna*, the genitive of *ad*. On page 528 again he speaks of a second person plural ending in *ir* which I have not heard. On page 529 he quotes a form *lohloh* = 'he sent', and *hitoh* for *hitor* = 'he did'. These are obvious mistakes in transliteration committed in an attempt to reproduce the guttural 'r' or uvular trill, a feature of the speech of Hill Maria in particular. They are not plural forms at all as he suggests. Similarly the form *himis* = 'give' (imperative) seems to be a mistake of transcription for the universal form in Bastar *himut*. He gives the form *hayatona* = 'I die'

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[1] One Muria, when asked to give an example of the difference between his language and Maria, said that for the imperative 'Come' Muria say *Daywara* while Maria say *Way*. The latter is, of course, the singular imperative from *wayana*, while *wara* is the plural imperative. *Daywara* means literally 'go come', an inverted form of the Hindi *Ā jao*. Not a very significant difference.

which is not found in Bastar, where moreover the verb *dolitana* is used. He speaks of *ki* and *ku* as dative terminations 'confounded' with the accusative in *nu*, whereas in my experience all three are interchangeable postpositions. He speaks of an ablative termination *agada*, which is rarely heard, and which is an instrumental postposition used by the Muria. He mentions plural terminations in 'ng' and 'r' as used by the Muria, and on page 532, speaking of the Maria dialect, he says that he has not found plurals in 'or' and 'ng' but that there is no reason for supposing that they are lacking. They are in fact almost entirely lacking both among Muria and Maria. On page 530 he speaks of separate plural forms for the second and third person of the various tenses of the verb. These do not exist, and I have not found the plural imperative termination in 'at', except in the negative imperative, nor the past negative tense, which he mentions.

5. Grierson's material can thus hardly be described as reliable, and it has led him into a curious position. On the basis of apparently wrong information he has linked the Gondi dialect of North Bastar with Gondi in general, and refuses to admit that it is a separate dialect at all. This seems to me incorrect. But his incorrect material being the same for the language spoken among the Muria, the Hill Maria, and the Bison-horn Maria, he has arrived at the correct conclusion from wrong premises that these three peoples, with the Jhoria, speak for practical purposes the same language. But it is not the statements alone in *The Linguistic Survey of India* which have led to a wrong conclusion. There are also omissions in the description of the Maria dialect of certain points which more clearly define its right to be described as an independent dialect. I would mention particularly the following. Nouns never inflect in oblique cases, and a variety of postpositions can all be used with the appropriate case, subject to no law except very rough standards of euphony. There is thus no ground for distinguishing declensions. There is no distinction between singular and plural in the second and third personal pronouns. In the conjugation of verbs, gender is only distinguished in the third person and then not always and number is only distinguished in the first person. There are other less striking points which tend to prove the same thing.

6. A final proof of the distinct entity of this common Bastar dialect can be found by looking further afield and comparing it in general with those dealt with by Lind[1] and Chenevix Trench.[2] From such a comparison it seems justifiable to conclude that there are at least three main dialects of Gondi at the present time. Trench has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover practically the whole of the central plateau of the Central Provinces. Lind has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover the whole of the southern portion of Chanda District, and probably (though I have no proof of this) extends into the Godavari Basin between Bastar State and the Nizam's Dominions. A modified form of this dialect, which is full of Telugu influences, appears to be spoken in the southern and western portions of Bastar State. The Bastar dialect is the third.

7. For historical and physical reasons there is nothing surprising in the independent existence and survival of this dialect. Lind has suggested, without giving reasons, that the Maria language, as he heard it, was the source of the various forms and dialects of Gondi all over the Central Provinces and Berar, but I have not been able to find any evidence for holding this view. Nor is it clear to me whether the Bastar dialect possesses in its grammar embryonic or vestigial forms. But the history of the country would justify the view that the dialect is very old, since it has had little or no contact with the outside world for centuries. Grierson, in Chapter VII of the *Imperial Gazetteer* (1907–9), has shown that it is not established whether the Dravidian languages entered India from the north-west where the Brahuis would therefore form the 'rear guard'; or whether they came from the south from the hypothetical 'Lemurian Continent'. Anthropology does not seem to have solved this problem during the past 30 years. But in either case the geographically central position of the Bastar dialect among Dravidian languages might give grounds for thinking that it constitutes an isolated survival

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[1] A. A. Lind, *A Manual of Maria* (Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon, 1913).

[2] C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919).

of an ancient form of speech. The only certain fact, however, is the age-long isolation of the Maria and Muria, and on the whole I am inclined to deduce from this fact that the peculiar structure of their grammar is a development from archaic Gondi in the direction of extreme simplification.[1] An example of archaism is to be found in the very few indications of gender, and those on the principle that males of the human species are masculine, and the rest of creation neuter. The absence of declensions shows no crystallization of convention in respect of the use of postpositions, which both Lind and Trench have called case endings. Again, there are only scanty traces of plural forms. These are entirely confined to proper names of places and peoples. Thus, the Maria and Muria like other so-called Gond, refer to themselves as Koitor. Place names such as Kaklur and Chitalur probably illustrate the same termination, as does the clan name Tokalur among Maria. The third personal pronoun 'or' was probably originally an honorific plural. And the verbal noun of agency, e.g. *kewalor* = 'doer', is almost certainly a plural form, since Lind has found the singular form *kewal* in Chanda District. The paucity of these forms suggests that they are a survival, but there is no sign of any tendency to add any suffix to them to make a new distinct plural, such as the termination 'ork' found in other dialects. Finally, there is the exceedingly clumsy method of constructing conditional sentences, which seems to be a primitive feature of the language, while the absence of many grammatical forms found in the Gondi of Betul District shows the latter language to have developed from an archaic and primitive condition in the direction not perhaps of simplicity, but of greater flexibility than that found among Maria and Muria.

8. Grigson has described Bastar State as 'an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history'. The present ruling family is descended from the Kakatia kings of Warangal, of whom the last was killed in battle with Mohammedan invaders early in the fifteenth century. His brother fled across the Godavari into Bastar, and from his time until very recent years the country has been practically without history and almost without contact with the outside world. Before the fifteenth century it appears from inscriptions that a Telugu line of Nagwanshi kings ruled in the eleventh century at Barsur, which lies in the centre of the State in the Bison-horn Maria country, and whose ruined temples indicate that there was then an advanced Hindu civilization in that area. Grigson has shown that up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest of the Deccan there must have been much Telugu infiltration, of which many signs still remain; but since that time the country has been largely undisturbed. There can never have been much Telugu or other Hindu influence on the Hill Maria or Muria; and the eight centuries which have elapsed since there can have been any strong Telugu influence on the Bison-horn Maria have given ample time for independent development of dialect, free from the outside influences to which Gondi has been exposed elsewhere. To this day Bastar State continues to be a very isolated area. On the north and north-east borders there is a certain amount of traffic with the adjoining British Indian districts and the Kanker State and the Jeypore Zamindari, which has brought the influence of Chhattisgarhi speech to bear on the Muria, but even this does not affect the Bison-horn Maria, whose contact with other peoples on the east is confined to the least developed portions of the Jeypore Zamindari. On the west and south of the State there is still not much intercourse across the Godavari river with the Chanda District, the Nizam's Dominions, and the Madras Province, in all of which areas the people are, in any case, similar to their Bastar neighbours and act as a buffer between them and more developed peoples. Although communications have been greatly improved in recent years, more than 11,000 square miles of the State's total area of 13,725 square miles are under forest, so that communication even between one tribe and another is still a matter of some difficulty. That this must have been very much more so in the past is obvious. The Maria and Muria still lead a laborious life, mainly dependent for their existence on

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[1] A similar tendency towards simplification of grammar is mentioned by Allan Crawford, in connexion with the English of the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha in his book *I went to Tristan* (London, 1941), p. 137. 'They seldom use the past tense'.

shifting cultivation of various types and, except in certain areas where the Bison-horn and Hill Maria have exterminated all game, on hunting.

9. All these factors must have combined to produce physical conditions capable in turn of producing marked individual changes and development in their language. One such condition is illustrated by a well-substantiated theory advanced by the American ethnologist Horatio Hale, and quoted by Otto Jespersen.[1] Hale found that in Oregon, a region not much larger than France, at least thirty different families of languages exist. This he explained by the fact that, among the hunting tribes of America, in which single families frequently were separated from the main tribe, in a vast and largely uninhabited country, language was much influenced by children, who were either left much to themselves owing to their parents' preoccupation with agriculture and hunting, or were actually left alone as the result of disease or the casualties of a hunter's life. Or again, where the men either died or were killed, the women left behind had little time for domestic life, and the children were neglected not only in respect of their physical welfare but also in respect of the correctness of their speech. From these circumstances arose fundamental changes of language, whereby actual new families of languages came into existence among ethnologically cognate peoples. I do not suggest that such extreme circumstances have ever been present among the tribes of Bastar, but they must have been present to some extent among the Bison-horn Maria and the Muria and to a greater extent among the small and isolated communities of the Maria of the Abujhmar Hills. The institution of the ghotul, where children of both sexes live together from an early age until marriage, separate from their parents for much of the day and the whole of the night, may also have led to great changes in the language. How important the influence of the ghotul has been it is not easy to judge, as the institution no longer exists among the Bison-horn and Hill Maria in the form in which it is now found among the Muria. But among the latter it is a fact, as Dr Elwin has discovered, that the children of the tribe have developed their own songs and stories and, to a very large extent, their own habits of conversation.

10. The foregoing arguments would explain the marked grammatical differences between the Bison-horn Maria and the Maria of the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari and of Chanda District as recorded by Lind. It would also explain the relative rarity of Hindi words in the Bastar dialect as a whole, while the earlier history of the race would explain the more numerous Sanskrit survivals and signs of Telugu influence; if indeed explanation of such features is necessary in view of the fact that Telugu and Gondi are closely related in the Dravidian family. It would also explain the differences of pronunciation which make it almost impossible for tribes who are fairly close neighbours to understand one another. For example, the speech of the Hill Maria is compared by the Bison-horn Maria to that of crows, owing to its numerous gutturals and glottal stops. One of these gutturals is the letter 'r' mentioned above, pronounced in the same way as a Frenchman pronounces the 'r' in Paris. Leonard Bloomfield calls this the 'uvular trill'.[2] The comparison with the speech of crows is reminiscent of Virgil's description of the young crows in their nests uttering *Presso ter gutture voces*, which may be confirmation of the accurate observation of natural phenomena by the Bison-horn Maria. The Bison-horn Maria themselves speak in a guttural manner, the Muria less so; and another feature of the pronunciation of both is its extremely staccato nature. They almost invariably fail to pronounce initial 'h' and there is a tendency to interchange the cerebral and trilled 'r'. In other respects the pronunciation is very much as described by Trench for the Betul Gondi, initial 'e' being often preceded by a 'y' sound, and 'e' and 'o' being pronounced sometimes short and sometimes long. Orthography, is not, therefore, an easy matter. I adopted the Nagri script in my grammar as being adequate for the purpose, but the Telugu script, according to Grierson, is better suited to the language.

11. An outline of the grammar of this language follows. There is little to say about syntax, beyond what I have indicated therein, since its syntax is similar

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[1] O. Jespersen, *Language*, pp. 180–8.

[2] ibid., p. 470.

197 to that of other Gondi dialects and of Hindi, of which the latter at least is widely known.

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193 *Nouns*. These are never inflected and there is no distinction of form between singular and plural. The oblique cases are indicated by postpositions. Genders are very rarely indicated and play little part in the grammar of the language, though they do exist in the minds of the speakers. They are two in number, masculine and feminine-neuter. The former includes only males of the human species and the latter covers the rest of creation, whether male, female or inanimate. The commonest postpositions are as follows:

tun, ke, or *nu*, indicate the accusative
nu, na, ta, or *nad* meaning 'of' (genitive)
tun or *ke* meaning 'to' (dative)
te or *tena* meaning 'with' or 'from' (comitative and ablative)
de meaning 'with' (instrumental) is only used of things
te or *taga* meaning 'in' or 'on' (locative)

All these can be used with any noun, the choice of alternatives apparently being governed by considerations of euphony. For example *lon*, a house, usually takes those postpositions which begin with 't' and elides its final 'n'; thus, *lota* = of a house, *lote* = in a house, and so on. There is no justification for distinguishing declensions.

Adjectives. These also are inflected neither for number, gender nor case. The language is well supplied with simple and compound adjectives, but the primitive feature of the language is that simple adjectives sometimes have to be expressed in a compound form, e.g. *bata hilwa* = poor, its literal meaning being 'without anything'.

The verbal noun is sometimes used as an adjective in the same way as the passive past participle in other languages, e.g. *murcha*, shut, from *murchana*, to shut.

Comparison is normally expressed, as in other Indian languages, by using the positive form of the adjective followed by the postposition *tena*, from. There is, however, a single interesting exception, *nela*, 'good', having the comparative and superlative form *nelator*. Syntactically this is used as other adjectives are with *tena*.

The superlative is expressed similarly to the comparative, as in Hindi with the use of the words *sabe mul*, 'all'; e.g. *sabe mul tena perke*, 'last of all'.

Pronouns and Pronominal Adjectives. The only remarkable feature of these is that there is a distinct word for 'we', namely *mamat*, usually shortened in conversation to *mat*. This is one of the very few plural forms in the language. I = *nana*, thou and you = *nima* and *or* = he, she, or they. Another interesting feature is that pronouns have inflected forms. *Nana* produces *na*, *nima* produces *ni*, *or* produces *on*, and *mamat* produces *ma*.

Pronominal adjectives are distinct adjectives and not merely the genitives of pronouns, except in the case of *ona*, his. They are *nawa* or *na* = my, *niwa* or *ni* = yours, and *mawa* or *ma* = ours.

Numerals. Up to and including 6, the cardinal numbers are almost identical with those in Telugu. From 7 to 19 inclusive the Hindi numerals are used, after which comes *korok*, 20. Beyond this the word *kori* = score, is used in combination with other numbers. This word is of wide distribution in Eastern India, being used in Oriya among other languages, but is probably Dravidian in origin. For 100 the Hindi word *sau* is frequently used, as is the Urdu word *hazar*, a thousand, to denote vaguely large numbers. An interesting feature of the numerals is that the word for 2 has a masculine form *iru* and a neuter form *rend* or *rand*. This is one of the few cases where gender is distinguished.

Ordinals are the same as cardinals with the sole exception of *onde*, first.

Frequency is expressed by the word *vela*, time, probably borrowed from Marathi, which is added to the cardinal number, and multiplicity is expressed in the same way.

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APPENDIX TWO

Demonstrative, Interrogative, and Relative Pronouns and Adjectives. The demonstrative pronouns do not inflect but distinguish genders. The demonstrative adjectives are the same. This-*ivr* or *ivn* masculine, and *id*, feminine-neuter. That-*or*, masculine, and *ad*, feminine-neuter.

The interrogative pronoun 'who' has various forms in different areas, those which I have heard being *benor*, *bor*, *benon*, and *ben*. There is also a feminine and neuter form *bed* or *bad*, which.

There are no true relative pronouns. Relative clauses are avoided completely by such means as 'that man came, to him I said', for 'I said to the man who came'.

There are no reflexive pronouns, the sense of 'self' being rendered by an emphatic suffix 'i' or 'e'.

Postpositions and Adverbs. The structure of the language in this respect is precisely the same as that of Hindi and other similar Indian languages. Thus there are a number of true postpositions and a number of adverbs used as postpositions by being linked to the noun either by the genitive or ablative postpositions. For example 'in front of the house' would be *lon ta muns*. There are also pure adverbs of place, time and manner, which have no peculiar features.

Verbs. There are no regular conjugations in this language, though all the verbs are conjugated with a remarkable degree of similarity. In many respects the conjugation of verbs is close in manner to Hindi and other Indian languages, and so calls for no particular mention in an outline of this type. One or two peculiarities, however, are of importance.

Normally the second person singular and plural are the same and make no distinction of gender. The first person has different forms for the singular and plural but makes no distinction of gender. The third person is the same for singular and plural but has different forms for the masculine on the one hand and the feminine-neuter on the other.

The tenses which have no particularly interesting features are the aorist present, the continuing present, the simple future, the imperfect, the past aorist, and the pluperfect.

The continuing present, the imperfect, and the pluperfect tenses are constructed by means of participles used with the auxiliary verb 'to be' as in Hindi.

The imperative, the infinitive, the participles and the verbal nouns are for the most part unremarkable.

A peculiar feature of the language is the existence of a conditional tense. An example of this from the verb *poytana*, to seize, is typical of all verbs:

1st person singular	*poyen*
2nd person singular	*poyin*
3rd person singular	*poyer*
1st person plural	*poyerom*

This tense can be used equally for future or past conditional clauses, but in Bastar State it can only be used in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, not in the protasis. The protasis is always expressed by a rather clumsy participial construction, the compound parts of which are not found elsewhere in the language. Thus, 'if he had come' is *or wâtke*. *Ke* is a postposition meaning 'by way of' or 'by reason of'. *Wat* appears to be a past participle active, which is never used in any other construction. The words might, therefore, be literally translated 'by reason of him having come'.

Although it is convenient to regard the infinitive as normal and regular, in fact there is no real infinitive in the language in the English grammatical sense of the word. *Poytana* meaning 'to seize' is really the genitive of a verbal noun *poyta*, and this fact is extremely clear from the general use of this so-called infinitive in the language. Occasionally, however, this genitive form is itself used as a verbal noun and also as a supine similar to the Latin supine terminating in 'um'.

Participles normally in use are the present and the past participles active and past participle passive. Apart from the latter there is no such thing in this language as the passive voice, and any such idea has to be expressed either by an intransitive verb, a paraphrase introducing an active verb, or a paraphrase containing the passive past participle.

193 The language has a noun of agency formed from the verb, e.g. *poyialur* meaning 'one who seizes'. An unusual participle is that of resemblance, e.g. *poytap* meaning 'as if seizing'.

Typical of Gondi dialects in general and also found in the Muria dialect are the negative tenses and the negative imperative. The former is used to express negative action in past, present, or future without the addition of any negative particle. The negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive suffix *ma* to the root of the verb, and this suffix may be of Sanskrit derivation and related to the forms *mat* in Hindi and *ma* in Pushtu and Persian. Very rarely one hears a negative gerund formed from the root of the verb and the termination *wahah*.

Causal verbs are formed according to regular rules, as are compound verbs. There are no inceptive or desiderative verbs, but there is a potential verb *parana* which is used in a variety of ways corresponding to the Hindi *sahna* and *parna*.

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APPENDIX THREE

GHOTUL TITLES

The following is a list of titles collected from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria country. I owe many of the derivations and meanings to Mr A. N. Mitchell.

TITLES OF CHELIK

Achhoy	Hindi. *Achhā* means 'good'.
Adhikar, or Adhker	Hindi. *Adhikār* means 'authority'.
Akilsai	Probably a Mussalman name, Aqal Shah. The latter word always becomes Sai in Gondi and either in its original or corrupt form is common among the Gond.
Aliram	A curiously mixed Hindu and Mussalman name.
Alorsing or Alursi	Gondi. *Alor* is 'one who makes a disturbance'.
Apkari or Atkari	Urdu. An excise man.
Athpahariya	Hindi. 'One who is on duty for eight watches', day and night. Used in Bastar for the village drudge.
Baidar	Hindi. *Bahidār*, a money-lender's accountant.
Baksi	Urdu. *Bakshi*. A common title in northern India among Mussalmans and Hindus. Also a Parsi surname, 'treasurer'.
Bandobast Saheb	Urdu. A Settlement Officer. Here probably given after a visit to the village of Mr S. M. Ishaque who is widely known in Bastar under this title.
Bandukdar	Urdu. One who carries a gun.
Barko	
Beldar	Urdu. A digger, one who wields a spade.
Belumdar	Gondi. One who owns a *belum* or garden.
Budhker	Hindi. A clever fellow, one who has *budh*, intelligence, used of village officials.
Captan	English. A title usually used of the State Superintendent of Police.
Chajen	Gondi. One who roams about.
Chālan, Chālak, or Chelān	Gondi borrowing from Hindi *chalāna*, meaning organizer.
Chalki	Hindi. Assistant to a headman.
Chaprāsi	Hindi. A peon, one who wears a *chaprās* or badge.
Chelik-sai	Lord of the chelik.
Chelik-sunder	*Chelik* is Gondi, meaning a 'good-looking, unmarried youth'. *Sunder* is Hindi *sundar*, beautiful.
Chowkidar	Hindi, watchman.
Chutukdar	
Constiball	English. A constable.
Dafedar	Urdu. One in charge of a section.
Daidar	A corruption, through Halbi, of Hindi *dawan*, oppression. Means a 'bully'.
Dakdar	English. Doctor.
Dandasi	Rare.
Dāroga	Urdu. An inspector.
Dewān	Urdu. A Diwan, or Prime Minister.
Dubey	A Brahmin name, contraction of Dwivedi.
Dular or Dularsing	Gondi. The word means 'love'.
Engineer	English.
Gaidar	Cowherd(?), from Hindi *gai*.
Gāita	Gondi. A priest.

Gangedar	Perhaps from Ganga, the Ganges.
Gāred	English. A Forest Guard.
Garhi	From Hindi, *garh* fort, or headquarters (?). Perhaps *châtelain*.
Gotul-sai	Gondi and Urdu. 'Lord of the ghotul.'
Gurti	Gondi. Strong.
Hagru	A nickname having reference to defaecation, usually given by parents to deceive hostile demons as to a child's true value. Here it is rather a nickname than a title.
Hardi-garbo	Hindi and Halbi. Refers to turmeric powder.
Havaldar	Urdu. A sergeant.
Hikmi	A Halbi social title.
Ijardar or Ijeldar	Urdu. From *ijara*, a monopoly. Used in Bastar of excise contractors.
Issaldar	Probably from Urdu Risaldar, an officer of cavalry.
Jailer	English.
Jalamsai	Gond name, probably corruption of Urdu Jalim Shah.
Jalla or Jallam	Hindi. Means a 'spider's web'.
Jamadar	Urdu. An infantry rank above Havildar.
Jangel Saheb	Forest Officer.
Jelkar	Gondi. A ripple on water.
Jelu or Jeluk	Gondi. An obstructive fellow.
Jhakajhol	
Jhalakwar	Hindi. One who glitters.
Jilen	Perhaps from Hindi, *jila*, thin or fine. Compare English 'skinny'.
Jilmil	Hindi. Mica.
Joler	Hindi. This and the following title suggest a cheat, but Joler is not quite so strong as this. Perhaps 'fibber' would put it better.
Jolma	Probably a variant of the above.
Julpi	Hindi. From *juluph*, a curl of the hair. Hence curly-haired.
Jhalakrai Jhulukrai	Hindi. From *jhalakna*, to glisten. Hence, one who glistens. Like Lingo, founder of the ghotul.
Jumukdar	Hindi. From *jhumka*, little bells on the ear or ankle, and thus one who carries such bells. These are often worn as ornaments, especially by the Jhoria Muria.
Kajanti	Corruption of *khajānchi*, a treasurer.
Kalbot	
Kālikdar	Hindi. From *kālā*, black.
Kalingsai	Corruption of Hindi *kalgi*, an aigrette on a turban, and *shah*.
Kāmdar or Kāmdar	Hindi. An agent.
Kandki	Hindi. Village officer in charge of a *kānd*, a section.
Kanjus	Hindi. A miser.
Kapatdar	Hindi. From *kapaddār*, a dressing-boy.
Kara	
Katlami	A Gondi clan-name.
Khuti Manjhi	
Killāsing	From Hindi *killāna*, to scream.
Kisimsai	Probably a corruption of the name Kasim Shah.
Kopki	
Kosa	Hindi. A silk cocoon.
Kotiya	Hindi. One in charge of the *kothi* or granary.
Kotwar	Hindi. A village watchman.
Kude	Gondi. From *kudāna*, to sit. Thus, one who is always sitting.

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Kusel	Hindi. From *kushal*, happiness. Thus, the happy boy.
Lahardar, Laharu, Laharchi or Laharsing	Used in Gondi to mean a 'dandy', from Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth. The wearing of some unspeakable striped shirt is regarded as very fast and 'advanced' by the Muria.
Likin or Likhen	One who carves hair combs, from Hindi *likhna*, to write.
Mālik	Urdu. A master.
Manikdar	Hindi. One who owns a ruby: precious stones often are girl-symbols.
Mānijar	English.
Mānjhi	Hindi. A boatman or skipper. Used in Bastar for the Headman of a Pargana.
Master	English.
Meliyā	From Gondi *melāna*, to wander.
Mitchell Saheb	Scotch.
Mirgur	From Gondi *mirāna*, to run.
Muharrir	Urdu. A clerk.
Mukhwan	From Hindi *mukh*, a face; one who produces people before a panchayat.
Mokkadam	Urdu. A village headman.
Maliyāsing	From Gondi *mal*, a peacock and the name Singh.
Munshi	Urdu. A reader.
Mutra	Hindi. One who urinates. Probably given to a boy who was caught urinating inside the ghotul, or to a bed-wetter.
Nāchen	Hindi. From *nāchna*, to dance. A dancer.
Nākedar	A subordinate in charge of an outpost, *nāka*.
Narhar	A Hindu name.
Nāzir	Urdu. A tahsil official.
Neliya	Gondi. *Nelo* means good, hence 'a good fellow'.
Nengi	A Halbi social title.
Nispettar	English. Inspector.
Odsel	English. Overseer.
Oppal	Probably from Hindi, *uppam*, best.
Padru	From Hindi *pādna*, to pass wind. Probably given to a boy who had the habit of doing this inside the ghotul.
Paherdar	Hindi. From *pahar*, a watch. Hence a watchman.
Pāgun	Hindi. From *pāgā*, a turban. Hence one who has a turban.
Pagun-meliya	See above. *Meliyā* is a Gondi word meaning a wanderer.
Paik	Hindi. Paik is a foot soldier. The word is used in Bastar of all subordinate officials.
Pande-Pardhan	The Pardhan are the priests and musicians of the Gond. Pande-Pardhan appears as a court official in some of the Ghotul Pata.
Pasaidar	Gondi. *Pasai* is the mung pulse. Hence the title means 'one who owns mung'. Probably given because of the assonance with Tahsildar or Issaldar.
Patwāri	Hindi. A village land record official, originally an accountant.
Phorka	Gondi. The bulbul.
Phopp Singh	Probably from the Hindi root *phoph*, which in various forms means 'lung', hence anything spongy, hence 'fatty'. The late Willy Forbes, Secretary of the Nagpur Club, was very fat. He was known to the servants as '*Phophas Sahib*' (A.N.M.).
Raja Saheb	Hindi. A king.

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Rânger	Forest official.
Rengo	Hindi. *Rengna* means 'to stroll'.
Rupedar	One who owns rupees or silver.
Saidar	A Hindi social title.
Salâm	An Urdu greeting.
Saledar or Silledar	Urdu Ziledar, one in charge of a district. The Silledar was the armour-bearer of the old Maratha chivalry, and the breeder of mares for the army.
Salho	From Hindi *chalna*, to go. One who goes.
Sâligrâm or Sâligrâi	A Hindi name, Shaligram, described as meaning a stone linga of the Hindu god Mahadeo.
Salya or Selya	A local, but not Gondi, word *sal*, meaning (?) pangolin.
Sanker	Eastern Hindi, meaning morning.
Sikandâr	A Mussalman name.
Sileh	Gondi *sile*, clothing (Hindi *sina*, to sew).
Singga	From Hindi *sing*, a horn.
Sipâhi	Urdu, a soldier.
Sirdâr	Urdu, a chief.
Sirajdâr or Sirasdar	Urdu, Sarishtedar, a judicial moharrir.
Sirkil	English, Circle Inspector of Police, probably named after the popular Thakur Manbahal Singh, who for long held this position.
Subedâr	Urdu, a military officer.
Sudher	Halbi, *sudh*, cleverness, hence a clever fellow.
Suen or Suwel	Gondi corruption of Hindi *kuâ*, a well.
Sulhi	Probably corruption of Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence 'cook'.
Suluksai	A Gondi name. Sai is the same as Shah.
Sunder	Hindi. *Sundar*, beautiful.
Surjut	Hindi *suraj ki jyoti*, the brightness of the sky.
Tabu	
Tahsildar	Urdu. Revenue official.
Tekedar	Hindi. A Tekadar is one who farms the revenues of a village on payment of a quit-rent.
Tel-dundi	Hindi. An oil-press.
Tindka	From Gondi *tindâna*, to eat, perhaps 'hungry or greedy one'.
Uden	From Gondi, *uddâna*, to sit. Hence one who sits down. Compare Kude.
Ukwar	Gondi. A mattock.
Vakil	Urdu. A pleader.

TITLES OF MOTIARI

Achhoke	Gondi adjective, good.
Alosa	Gondi adjective, pleasant-spoken.
Anbaiko	Perhaps from Marathi *ana*, bring, and *weh*, root of Gondi *wehnânâ*, to say, and female termination *ko*. Hence 'she who tells one to bring things'.
Beldarin	Feminine of Beldar, q.v.
Belosa	Perhaps derived from the bel tree.
Chaiko	Gondi. One who talks nonsense.
Dasoda	Hindi name.
Dulosa	Corruption of Hindi *dulocha*, soft.
Galje	Gondi. The noisy one.
Gandri	Hindi and Halbi, one who smells bad. Probably a derisive nickname rather than a proper title.
Haliyâro	Hindi *haliya*, a herd or flock, hence cowherd or shepherdess.

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APPENDIX THREE

Jaimo	
Jalaro, Jalāri or Jaliyāro	From Hindi *jalna*, to burn, perhaps 'hot stuff'.
Jalko	Gondi. A ripple. Compare Jelkar.
Jamadarin	Feminine of Jamadar, q.v.
Janakrāi, Janko, Jamko or Jankāi	Hindi names.
Jhelo	Gondi. A splash of water.
Jilmili	Hindi. Mica. Compare Jilmil.
Junki	Gondi. Tinkling.
Kotwarin	Feminine of Kotwar, q.v.
Lahari or Laharo	From Hindi, *lahar*, a wave.
Malko or Malkārose	Gondi. *Mal*, a peacock, a girl like a peahen.
Manjāro	From Hindi root *manj*, middle. Perhaps the second of three sisters, or one who holds a secondary place after the ghotul leaders.
Mankai	Hindi *mānāna*, to obey, hence the obedient one.
Mette	English mate in a gang, with a Gondi feminine termination.
Mulāri or Mulāro	Probably from Hindi *mulya*, value, hence 'precious'.
Mulki	From Urdu *mulk*, country. Thus 'country lass'.
Mutri	Feminine of Mutra, q.v. But not necessarily, in this case, his ghotul mate.
Nirosa	A Sanskritic word meaning 'clean'. There does not seem to be such a word in Hindi, but the meaning is definite. The word exists in Halbi, and it may be connected with *nirog*.
Piosa	From Hindi *pina*, to drink. Perhaps one who drinks a lot of palm-wine or 'the thirsty one'.
Rani	Hindi. A queen.
Saidarin	Feminine of Saider, q.v.
Saile	Gondi. Friendly.
Salko	Feminine of Salya, q.v.
Samsāro	The patient one. *Samsar* is Halbi for patient.
Sargi	Hindi for the sal tree.
Siliyāro	Gondi *siliya*, a vegetable.
Silo	Hindi cloth or clothing (*sina*).
Singāro	Hindi *shringār*, adorned.
Sulāko	From Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence perhaps 'cook'.
Surtān	Hindi *surta*, thought. Hence 'thoughtful'.
Surti, Surto or Surtel	Hindi, tobacco. One who distributes tobacco to the chelik.
Tiliyāro	From a pulse. Probably given for its assonance with Jaliyaro or Siliyaro.
Tiloka	From the Hindi name, *trilok*.
Tulki	
Tusro or Tusāro	
Ujiro or Ujhāro	Gondi. White.

APPENDIX FOUR

CENSUS RETURNS

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It may be of interest to give the Census returns for the different aboriginal tribes in Bastar. But it must be remembered that these figures are of unequal value. Any Census in a tribal area has to face unusual difficulties. There is first the muddle over the names of tribes—aboriginals are always changing their names to get a social lift; then the dislike of the people numbered to telling the truth; then the incapacity of the enumerators; and finally the very ancient objection of primitive people to being counted at all.[1]

But the figures for Bastar, such as they are, will be found below. In 1891, they were as follows:

Bhattra	21,439
Gond	70,069
Gotte	5,070
Halba	13,865
Jhoria	936
Koi	7,281
Maria	25,855
Muria	53,960
Parja	13,467
Tagara	396

In the next three enumerations all the aboriginals of Bastar—the Halba cannot really be counted as aboriginal—were counted together under the name Gond. In 1931 there was a fresh attempt at a more scientific classification, though this too was over-simplified and thus failed of its purpose. In 1931 the official figures were:

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Koya	9,988
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Parja	17,568

Fortunately the 1931 figures were collected in Jagdalpur and not (as in 1941) in Nagpur and hence it was possible for Grigson to examine them and make additional estimates which have much more scientific value. I will make a table of the figures taken from various parts of his book.

Bhattra	36,611
Bison-horn Maria.	146,070
Gadaba	398
Ghotul Muria	61,000
Hill Maria	11,500
Jagdalpur Muria	32,000
Jhoria Muria	17,000
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

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[1] In 1881, internal dissensions in Bastar 'brought the census operations to a standstill'. But May's Census of 1921 was 'conspicuous', as was Grigson's in 1931. Among the causes for public hostility, the C.P. Reports give such beliefs as that Government wanted the names of young girls for immoral purposes, that every tenth man was to be

APPENDIX FOUR

Nothing more vividly reveals the inadequacy of Census figures for ethnographic purposes, than a comparison of the 1931 official totals with those of 1941. There was no great epidemic, famine or migration to account for the changes.

	1931	1941
Bhattra	36,611	10,869
Doria	..	14,605
Gond	24,407	16,620[1]
Koya	9,988	nil
Maria	146,070	120,110
Muria	124,993	219,654
Ojha	..	137
Pardhan or Pathari	..	960
Parja	17,568	25,820

The Northern Muria were distributed in 1941 as follows:

	Narayanpur Tahsil	Kondagaon Tahsil
North	16,365	33,146
West	1,322	..
South	16,480	33,555
TOTAL	34,167	66,701
GRAND TOTAL		100,868

The great majority of this 100,868 are Muria whose culture centres round the ghotul, though a few hundreds must be deducted for those under Bhattra influence in southern Kondagaon. The number of Jagdalpur Muria are now given as 36,682 as against the 32,000 estimated in 1931.

Grigson gives:

Jhoria Muria	17,000
Other Ghotul Muria	61,000

which makes a total for Ghotul Muria of 78,000, a figure which has now risen to roughly 100,000—the rate of increase is not unparalleled in other parts of the State. I think that Grigson probably underestimated the number of Jhoria Muria, as he did not include those living in the Kongur and Chalka Parganas. My very rough estimate for 1941 would therefore be:

Jhoria Muria	30,000
Other Ghotul Muria	70,000

Of the total number of 219,654 Muria, only 1,450 returned themselves as following the Hindu religion: in Narayanpur there were 246, in Kondagaon 12 and in Jagdalpur 336. It is curious that out of the heavily Hinduized Bhattra tribe only 34 out of 10,869 returned themselves as Hindus in 1941.

The figures for several of the other tribes have been thrown into confusion by the general custom of Bastar aboriginals calling themselves Muria, a term which is much more popular than Gond or even Raj Gond—words which are sometimes

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sent to colonize Upper Burma and that human sacrifices were required for a goddess in Raigarh. Even now special offerings are made by Maria and Muria to purify their villages from the contagion of the Census.

[1] Even adding 953 Raj Gond, 96 Dhur Gond, 336 Mir Gond and 20 Dhurwa Gond, the total is only 17,215.

used contemptuously in the State. Thus 44,048 Bison-horn Maria in the Dantewara Tahsil returned themselves as Muria in 1941 (though another 25,212 continued to call themselves Maria), and all but 4 of the 9,001 Bison-horn Maria in the Konta Tahsil returned themselves as Muria. The remarkable decrease in the number of Bhattra is probably due to the same cause, and the 9,988 Koya of 1931 have disappeared altogether. On the other hand, 14,605 persons in southern Bastar preferred to call themselves Dorla, and I have accordingly entered them under that name in the map at p. 11.

The present number of Hill Maria is probably in the neighbourhood of 13,000. My guess for the Bison-horn Maria, which is perhaps as good as anyone else's guess, is 175,000.

We may note finally that in 1941 there were in Bastar:

Banias	228
Brahmins	3,948[1]
Christians	2,704[2]
Kshatriyas	805
Mussalmans	2,060
Sondis	3,453
Telangas	11,734
Telis	1,619

[1] Of whom 3,307 were in the Jagdalpur Tahsil.
[2] Of whom 1,527 were 'Isai' and the rest 'Christian'.

APPENDIX FIVE

STATISTICAL INQUIRY

An inquiry was made into certain specific matters relating to marriage from 2,000 adult married Muria men distributed in 220 villages. The total population of Muria who maintain ghotul is about 100,000, and the number of genuine Muria villages containing a ghotul in 1941 was 522. The villages chosen were distributed over the whole area except the extreme west and north-west, which it was not possible to visit and where indeed the ghotul tradition has been somewhat obscured by external influence.

I have given figures from this inquiry in many parts of the book, but for convenience I will re-assemble some of them here.

1

The Ages of the Men Consulted	
Between 20 and 30	445
,, 30 and 40	728
,, 40 and 50	567
50 and over	260

2

Number of Men who had Lived in Different Types of Ghotul	
Those living in *jodidār* ghotul	720
Those living in 'modern' ghotul	1,280

3

Marriage	
No. marrying girl to whom they were betrothed	1,884
No. of 'romantic' or forced marriages	116
No. marrying girls in their own ghotul	765
No. marrying girls in a different ghotul	1,235
No. marrying their ghotul wives	77
No. of Lamsena or service-marriages	113

4

Cousin Marriages	
No. of *gudamol* marriages	1,189
No. of *kuttyāri* marriages	805
Marriages between totally unrelated persons	6

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Divorces	
No. of men still living with original wife	1,765
No. of widowers	176
Total number of successful marriages	1,941
No. of divorces	59
No. divorced of 765 who married girls of the same ghotul	21
No. divorced of 1,235 who married girls of different ghotul	38
No. divorced among 720 belonging to *jodidār* ghotul	27
No. divorced among 1,280 belonging to 'modern' ghotul	32
No. divorced among 1,884 who married their betrothed	49
No. divorced out of 116 'romantic' marriages	10
No. divorced out of 316 who had connexion before marriage	14
No. divorced out of 113 Lamhada	13
No. divorced out of 77 who married their ghotul wives	9
No. divorced out of 26 who married the girls they made pregnant in the ghotul	Nil

6

Pregnancies	
No. of men who made a girl pregnant in the ghotul	80
No. of these living in *jodidār* ghotul	25
No. of these living in 'modern' ghotul	55
No. of men marrying girls already made pregnant by someone else	49
No. of men marrying girls made pregnant by themselves	26
No. of 113 Lamhada making their own betrothed pregnant	5

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Polygyny	
No. of Muria males (1941 Census)	51,373
No. of Muria females	49,495
No. of plural marriages	44
No. out of these 44 claiming to be successful	29

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Words without reference are Gondi, words in brackets, without reference, are Halbi.
G = Gondi, GN = Gondi of Narayanpur, GK = Gondi of Kondagaon, Ha = Halbi, H = Hindi, SKT = Sanskrit.

In order to make the book as easy as possible for the general reader, I have omitted in the text the majority of Gondi or Halbi-Chhattisgarhi words. But since many of these are interesting in themselves and necessary to complete our picture of the Muria, I have added a number of them here, classified according to subject. Words explained in the text are not usually included. It must be remembered that these are words used by the Muria, whose Halbi is uncertain and whose Gondi is often corrupt and takes different forms from place to place.

ADMINISTRATIVE

athpahariya (Ha)	The village drudge, who is on duty for 'all eight watches', often a Rawat or Kopa cowherd, from whose hands all visitors can take water.
châlki (H)	Manjhi's assistant. Also called **Garhi** (GN), **Chalau** (H), and sometimes **Jhoria** in the north.
dorbhum	(H. **khâlpati**). The Lowlands.
garh (H)	An ancient feudal division.
hât, atum	A bazaar.
kândki (H)	Mukkadam's assistant.
khâsa, khalsa (H)	Villages under the direct control of the State, paying their revenue direct and not through an intermediary.
kosur, paik (Ha)	Words used for outsiders and strangers. **Paik** is most commonly applied to chaprasis and constables. **Paik**, originally 'foot soldier' in Hindi, from *pair*, a foot. Cf. *paijama* in Persian = leg-clothes.
kotwâr (H)	The village watchman, often—but not always—a Ganda or Mahara.
mânjhi (H)	A pargana chieftain. A pure Hindi word meaning 'skipper of a ship'.
metabhum	The Hill country, especially the Abujhmar Hills, also called **mâr, mâri,** and **patâr**. **Mâr** is a word of wide distribution and is almost certainly identical with Oriya **mâl**. **Mâr** and its variants in Gondi means 'tree' and thus, as applied to a countryside probably means 'wooded uplands'. 'Uplands' is a relative term and in Orissa the word **mâl** applies to areas, inhabited by aboriginals, which are forested but not always very high. Of course the fertile plains are rarely in possession of aboriginals (A.N.M.).
mukaddam (H)	A village headman. Also called **thâkur** and **mokor** (GN).
nâr (G), **gaon** (H)	A village.
pâdarâj	Land without forest; used by the northern Muria for the flat rice-lands of Jagdalpur Tahsil.
panchâyat (H)	A judicial committee normally of five persons. Also called **bhumkâl udna** (GN).

pār, paghai	A word (H. **birān**) meaning an empty or deserted village site.
pāra (H)	A hamlet or group of houses forming part of a village. Another word commonly used is **tola**. Both words are widely distributed in India.
pargana (H)	The sub-division of a tahsil.
tāhsil (H)	An administrative sub-division of the State, in charge of a **tahsildar**.
thekadāri (H)	A village farmed out to a landlord who is generally in Bastar called a **thekadar**, but is known elsewhere in the Central Provinces as **malguzar** or **mokasa**.
yer gātum	A bathing place.
zamindāri (H)	An hereditary estate held on privileged tenure by local chiefs.

Articles of Daily Life and Use

dera	A spinning-wheel or **takli** (H) used for making cord from hemp.
dholangi	A bamboo bin for storing grain.
heti, yet	The winnowing-fan, **supa** (H).
hirkānj, irkās (GN)	The **sikka** cords depending from a carrying-pole, and in which the load is tied.
hoydal	Cooking-hearth of earth. When made of stones, **daying**.
hukur	Spoon.
kari, kuring	Leaf-plate or **patri**, made of **aking** leaves.
karul	Leaf-cup for drinking **jāwa**. An ordinary leaf-cup is **dopa**, or **doni** in Halbi.
katul	The country-cot, or **katiya**, now fairly common among Muria, but never used in the ghotul.
kāwar, bāyinga (GN)	A pole used for carrying loads.
malla, arka	The words most often used in Gondi for a pot. **Kila** or **gor** is a very large earthen pot, and **yer gāgir** is often used for a water-pot. Small pots are **kopa, kondel, tokai**.
mora, jol (GN)	A shield of leaves inserted into a bamboo framework, used as a protection against rain.
orka, bokka (GN)	A gourd ladle, also called **buriya**. A brass variety made by the Ghasia by the *cire-perdue* process is now often used for serving liquor.
rek, kālo	The leaf-hat used during the rains.
topāri	A rectangular **lidded** basket, also called **pera**. The Muria use a number of different baskets, including the common **jhāpi** which they call by its Hindi name; the **warria**, a square open basket also known as **takra, buti** or **gappa**, and the small leaf-basket called **hipti** or **hipota** (GN).
usmāl, uspāl	Rice-husker, the **musal** (H).

Articles of Iron

bāndal kaser or **bānda**	A knife.

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CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

godel	The ordinary serviceable axe. Also **marask** (GN) or **tayinga (tangiya)**.
gorka	A spear.
hatār, yetār	A sickle (**hasiya**).
kach	Iron. It is generally smelted and worked into tools by the Muria Lohar.
kadra	A long-bladed knife for killing animals.
kaser	Knife, specially the sacrificial knife used in worship, whence **kaser-gaita** or Knife Priest.
kusj	The shouldered digging-stick called **pulu** in the Abujhmar and **kus** in Halbi. It is sometimes used for husking grain.
kurār	A hoe.
meljiya	A razor.
pharsa (H)	The 'battle-axe' often used in ceremonial dances.
tatti	A sort of plane, **bārsa (HA)**.
yerk	A knife, for cutting grass and brushwood, with a long wooden handle, also called **harru, sura gāgra**, or **bhālu gāgra**, according to shape.

Astronomy

adi-bhum	Below the earth.
adurk	Hail.
bhimul-weel	Rainbow, 'the bow of Bhimul', the rain-giver.
bhum-garjālta	Thunder (Mitchell gives **idrita**).
hand-gariyāl-lopta	Eclipse.
hukum, mirko	The stars (in Betul, **sukkum**).
lenj	The moon.
nadum-bhum	The earth.
pir	Rain. (The same word is used in Betul, but Mitchell gives **musar** as used by the Bison-horn Maria).
porad	The sun. (Trench says the Betul Gond have no word for sun.)
porro-bhum	The sky.
pes-garum	Lightning (Mitchell gives **mirkāna**).

Cock-fighting

kāti	The knife attached to the cock's foot.
kork-wāhchāna (korka laral)	Cock-fighting.
wāhchāna kor (larāto kukra)	A fighting-cock.
nal (sut)	The thread with which the knife is tied.
thaila (Ha)	Purse to hold a set of knives.

Cultivation

aser	A wooden implement for carrying branches from the forest to the fields for **parka**. In Halbi **bharni**.
dippa	Also **erka** or **marhān (Ha)**. Level forest land burnt and cultivated in rotation.

104 **harpunj**	Sandals of sambhar-hide worn while treading the hot fields of axe-cultivation. **Katwāk** are wooden clogs.
kara	The **kothār** or thrashing-floor.
ketul	A field-hut, **lāri** (Ha).
kopir (ragra)	A soil-leveller.
kor-lāt	Also **balla** (GN) and **dhoana** (Ha). A rake used to spread the ashes evenly about a clearing or field.
koyāna (katai)	Reaping.
mariyāna (dubrayi)	The second ploughing.
mer-gutta	The winnowing-pole.
munda (Ha)	An artificial pond. In GN called **neling** and **katta.**
nangel (nāngar)	Plough.
pāhāna (khapai)	The first ploughing. This and similar Gondi words are the infinitives of verbs.
parha ursāna (ropa)	Transplanting.
parka	Also **dahi** (H). Brushwood is brought and spread over the fields, then burnt and the ashes are ploughed into the ground.
pārum (phār)	Ploughshare.
pehchna (biyāsi)	Puddling.
penda	The hillside axe-cultivation of the Maria and wilder Muria.
tondi, tond	A **mācha**-platform for watching the crops.
weda, bera (Ha)	A field.
wiaāna (mindai)	Thrashing.
witāna (bunai)	Sowing.

Daily Programme

104 **ād pāhar (adhu-pāhar)**	'Shade time.' Late afternoon.
805 **bāhat erta**	'It is bent.' Afternoon.
gai gohdi bera (Ha)	'Time of the return of the cows,' or **godroki** (Ha) 'Time of tying up the cattle'.
gānda lote bera (Ha)	'Time when the Ganda goes to his wife.'
hikāt (bhainsa andhiyar)	Dark, 'dark as a buffalo'.
hirri pord	When green parrots fly to the fields and the women come home.
jāwa pord, pite karu pāhar (pej bera)	Time for **jāwa,** 'time when the birds are hungry'. 10 a.m.
jāwa undāna pahār	Time for drinking gruel.
kaimāl huskār, gudin pahār	Time of the first sleep.
korkusāna pāhar (kukrabasi)	Cock-crow.
mulpe	Sunset.
nadam narka (manjhar rāti)	Midnight.
narki pāhar (bara bihāe)	Early morning. 6 a.m.
nekaitit pord, talla pord (munde bera)	'Sun-standing' or 'head-time'. Noon.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

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palvi viyinta, wiytu (raja karan bera)	Dawn: the time when Raja Karan rose and bathed.
pharphar bera	The flight of darkness.
phulsundri (Ha)	Evening when the flowers give out their fragrance.
tirtir pord	The sun rises **tir-tir** into the sky.
yer pord (panihāri bera)	Time for fetching water. 8 a.m.

DANCING DRESS

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chāpi, mogiya	Dancing-shield.
gathurta, karhāna	Cloth tied criss-cross over the chest.
gheri	Skirt, called **kochi** by the Hill Maria.
guba	Tuft of feathers.
irna, ghāti	Buttock-bells.
jela	Streamers attached to the cap.
kanda-hār, koya-kaudāng	Cowrie decorations.
kokti	Wooden 'horse' carried on shoulder.
lolita, puring, toka	Different parts of the 'horse'.
muyang, ghulghuli, ghungru	Small bells worn on arms or ankles.
topi (H)	Dancing-cap.

DEATH

bagmeri bhut (Ha)	Ghost of a man killed by a tiger.
biarān itāna	The ceremony of touching a dead fish at the end of a funeral. In Halbi **biaram** means the bad smell of a dead fish.
burkāl pāta	Song sung when a man is killed by a tiger.
erramtogh	A wife's elder brother or younger sister's husband, who have special duties at a funeral.
hanāl, muriyalor (duma)	The dead, the departed. *Hanāl* is a past participial form of the verb **handāna**, to go; and thus 'the departed' is a literal translation (W.V.G.).
hanāl gaita	Priest of the Departed.
hanāl gariya	Pot of the Departed.
hanāl gata (khama)	Wooden memorial pillar.
hāt hamur (marni)	Funeral.
hātur dhol (marni dhol)	The drum for the dead.
jiwa (Ha)	The soul.
jiwa tatāna, yer niyāna (dasnāhan)	Ceremonies on the tenth day.
jiya bitāl	Any relative, but not a *saga*, of the deceased.
kal ursana, kamk ursana	To erect a menhir.
kutukal, uraskal	Memorial menhir, from Gondi **kal**, a stone and **ursana**, to bury.
kishiyāna (agi deto)	Cremation.
selānj jurāl, selānjur	Ghost of a motiari.
nirkor kotāna (tijnāhan)	Ceremonies on the third day.

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ondar muttai, surel, orohrande, churin	The ghost of a woman dying in pregnancy or childbirth.
uriya bhut, mirchuk, matiya, kunwaria duma (Ha)	Expressions to describe the ghost of a chelik.
wich	A dead man.
wich bati (marâ-bhâta, dumakot)	Disposal place for the dead.

Dreams

barre mâltor (baramtor)	Talking in sleep.
bhâk katâr (thua)	Ceremony to prevent bad dreams. **Bhâk** means 'a promise', **katâr** a 'throwing away'.
jiwa (Ha)	The 'soul' that sees the dream.
kaniskna	Dream.
urkanor	*Nocturna eneuresis.*

Economic Relationships

adiya, adi (Ha)	The practice of lending bullocks or seed in consideration of receiving half the crop in return.
bâka (Ha)	The practice of loaning bullocks for a fixed amount of grain, say six khandi a year apiece.
begâr (H)	The practice of taking free, and generally forced, labour from the villagers.
bisâha (H)	A very old Sanskrit expression for the custom that reserved the twentieth part of the harvest for the Raja's officials.
biyaj (Ha)	Interest. It is noticeable that there is no Gọndi word for this.
dat	The annual cash payment to a farm-hand.
jewar, kural	Either a servant's monthly wage in kind, or the contribution of a whole village to a Lohar, Rawat, or Kotwar for his services.
kâbâr, kâbâri	The pledging of a man's services for a period of time in consideration of an advance of grain or money. **Kâbâr** is work done for someone else as opposed to **pari** (G) work done for oneself. **Kâbâri** probably means 'one who carries a **kâwâr**-load'.
karra (udhar, karja)	A loan.
wita (bethiya)	Wages.

Ethics

arrọ	Taboo: used chiefly of food.
arwit-tu, paisotu (GN)	Adultery. In Halbi **udaliya**.
bonde nohakâna, penda karsana (cherka gotna, chotii khel)	Masturbation.
dharom (Ha)	Virtue, a borrowing from Hinduism.
dong	Theft.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

eting getwal	Bestio-sexuality. There is no general word, but **getwāl** 'copulation with' is added to the name of the animal.
hafwark, wititu	Elopement. **Witāna** means 'to run'.
hawakāna	Murder.
jabardasti getna (Ha)	Rape. There is no Gondi word for this.
kondār-murt (bokra-baslya)	Incest: behaviour like a bull—in Gondi, or like a goat—in Halbi.
kusk-birtur, kusk-hātur	Suicide. **Kusk** means 'of one's own accord'; **birtur** is 'hanging'; **hātur** is 'death'.
malo	Taboo: used of places, actions and relatives.
pāpu (Ha)	Sin, an idea for which there is no special Gondi word.
polo	Taboo: a general word.
tupunj getwāl	Homosexuality.

Evening in the Ghotul

dhuyinga, pogho (surti)	Tobacco.
gāra pich, tora pend	Oil-waste of *bassia latifolia* often used for massage.
gik (maasni)	Mat of **marrām (botha)** grass.
hichār	Bamboo comb.
huajna dera	Sleeping-place.
irsāna	To comb the hair.
johār bhumkāl	Greeting to a company of boys.
johārni (Ha)	Act of salutation.
nohkāna	To massage.
paniya (Ha)	Wooden comb.
pitis pitis kotāna	To delouse the hair.
tarka, chāp (tāti)	Bamboo mat.
werak morhāna, kāyi morhāna (GN)	To crack the fingers.

Falconry

hachār	The hawk (**chhachān**).
hachār-murka (chhachān-dhuti)	The basket for the hawk's food.
hachār payāna tola	A goat-skin glove to protect the hand from scratches.
pasia, pawala	The elaborate wooden peg attached to the bird's cords to prevent them tangling.
uting parhāna	The bunch of palm leaves with which the boys drive the birds.

Festivals

bāsi pannag (bāsi tihār)	The 'stale' day after a festival marked by various observances. *Bāsi* is food left over from a meal and served up again.
jatra (SKT)	A festival, generally a clan-festival.
kut pohchāna, nārtāte kiyāna	Purifying the village.
marhai (H)	A commercial festival.

104 **pandum**	Festival.
penkarsana, karsār (deo khelni)	'The games of the gods' at the clan festivals.
pohchāni, bohorāni	Ceremony for removing evil from the village.
polhāna (jogāni)	The offering of first-fruits.
punāng tindāna (nāwa khāni)	New Eating Ceremony.
singoti, sela	The fringe of ears of grain tied over doors at festivals, especially Diwali.

FIRE-MAKING

hāhak	The 'hearth' of a fire-drill.
khanda	The saw. In Hindi this word means 'sword'.
khanda-achāna	Making fire by a saw.
nogho-kodiya, ate	The 'hearth' of a saw.
nur-āchāna	Making fire by a drill.
nurkis	Fire made by a drill.
usmal	The drill.
wadur kis	Fire made in a hearth.

FOOD

104 **alainj (chapora)**	Red ants.
gāto	The ordinary **bhāt** or boiled rice.
262 **gondka**	'Crab's eyes' or **kekra ankhi**.
gorāng, gorra	**Mandia** (*eleusine coracana*).
guge (batar kira)	Edible flying ants.
hāring	The ordinary wheat-cake or chapatti.
harsum	**Sarson** oil-seed, the profitable crop *sinapis alba rape*.
hind porak (chhind kira)	Edible grubs living in the *phoenix sylvestris* palm.
jandrān	**Jondra** maize (*zea mays*).
jata	Beans (*dolichos lablab*).
jāwa	A gruel, called elsewhere **pej**, the staple food of the aboriginals of central India, made of rice or millet.
kāng, ārk	*Setaria italica*. Also called **koliya lengri**.
kohola, koera (Ha)	These are words applied rather widely to the small millets beloved of the aboriginals. **Koera** applies most particularly perhaps to **kutki**, *panicum miliaceum*. Other popular small grains are— **mal kohola** or **bara koera** **turo kohola** **os koera** **mach** or **hudala koera** **koda** (*paspalum scrobiculatum*) **rende, hamu, gatka** or **sawa** (*panicum frumentaceum*) **ragda, dusa, kapni,** wild rice. **chikma** or **turiya kohola** (*panicum miliare*).
kore (harwa)	The pulse *glycine hispida*.
kotum kukk	A mushroom (*kukk* is an umbrella). The Muria distinguish several varieties, such as the **bodāng**, the **pud-kukh** which grows on an ant-hill, the

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	mundur-kukh which appears at Dassera time, and the **hichra-kukh**, a small fungus generally growing on an ant-hill.
kusir	**Sâg** or curry.
mâti	Roots. A great many of these are eaten; common among them are the **kândul mâti** or sweet potato, the **hind mâti** or root of the *phoenix sylvestris*, the **bhurka** or **bhains deti mâti.**
nuka	Husked rice.
nung	Oil from the seed of *til*, *sesamum indicum.*
pande, panne	Frog.
pesal (mung)	The pulse *phaseolus mungo.*
pupul (urad)	The pulse *phaseolus radiatus.*
rahar (arhar)	The pulse *cajanus indicus.*
toskâr mât (tikur)	The wild arrowroot, *curcuma angustifolia.*
wark	Parched rice, also **wakuhâk** (GN) and **chiura** (H), the poor man's delicacy eaten between meals.
wanji	**Dhân** or rice.
yete	Crab.

Ghotul Buildings

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bândra	The fence round the ghotul enclosure.
dinda râj (Ha)	'The kingdom of the Unmarried.'
ghotul	The village dormitory.
ghotul racha (khor duâr)	The dancing ground.
kirki bukân (kâna polka, bhulka)	Holes in the walls for storing tobacco and small possessions.
kodasâr	The stable.
kupâhi ghotul	The outer room of the dormitory.
kutul (pirha)	A wooden pillow.
mandak	The open shed in the ghotul court.
murwis haral (mongri deri)	The central pillar of the building.
nata haral (osma deri)	The side pillars.
parmâlghor ghotul	'The dormitory beautiful as a bison's horns.'
rosni (akori)	A long bamboo with a catch on one end, used by chelik to pull down fruit and often kept in the ghotul.
sojâhi ghotul	The inner room.
walkor (akosa)	Wooden bracket for hanging drums.
wark bâd (dâru mâcha)	The wood stack.

Hair-dressing

bang-mâhena (pâti)	Parting, either for boy or girl.
bechâng (tapra)	Boy's fringe.
julpis	The hair on either side of the parting.
kalgi khopa, kunjâr	Method by which girls tie their hair in a bun.
kunjâr balla	Wooden block under the hair kept in place by wooden hair pins.

kunjār koto	Wooden hair pins.
kupar (jura)	Top-knot.

HONEY

poring, puk-por	Honey-comb.
puk	Honey.
ukhi	Burning grass tied to the end of a bamboo and used to smoke out a hive.
wising or **puk-wising**	Bees. In Halbi, **ondār māchhi.**

HUNTING

dohola	A club arrow-head. In Halbi, **dokena.**
gunel	A pellet-bow which has a **gunel-moras**, or string, a **phata**, or sling, **koda**, or wooden pegs in the sling, in which **gulla**, or small stone balls, are slung.
kārin, kār	An arrow, of which the various parts are **kārin** The head. **marrai** The shaft. **kār-hachhar** The shaft-nock. **kanāng** The barb. **hulum** The tang fitting head to shaft. **mal-tohk** The feathers.
korpanj (onha)	A trap-pit dug in a corner of a forest clearing.
lākāna, lākānj (dand-detor)	The sacrifice after a successful hunt.
mitwanj, ahela	A cage-trap for porcupine and hares.
molol-wad, molol-bāgur (lamha-jāl)	A trap for hares.
nirāl-tonga	A cage-trap for panthers.
pitwanj (dang-phanda)	A spring-trap.
wadi (jiyād-bāgur)	A trap for large animals.
wali dāyna, weta walina (GN)	To go hunting. **Parad,** a Halbi word from Oriya, is used specially of the ceremonial hunt.
weel	A bow, of which the various parts are **weel** The stave. **hawend** The string. **kitsi** The horns.
wijja-weta (bij-parād)	The annual ceremonial hunt before sowing.

HOUSE AND VILLAGE

atana-lon	The kitchen. In Halbi, **randha-ghar.**
awār, charak (GN)	The garden, or **bāri**, the precious, treasured fenced-in field near the house, which is carefully manured and where the most valued crops are sown.
bohla, bira	The verandah. A very important part of the building, where visitors stay and women are segregated during their periods. Also called **bhaunti** (Ha).
bohla-hunjāna	Menstruation-hut or verandah-space. Also **aeka-lon, witār, kurma** (GN) and **chhua-kuriya** (Ha).
dheki lon	The room where grain is husked.
hamur-lon	A house in which a corpse is lying. **Marni-ghar** (Ha).

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hanāl-lon	The small hut for the placation or tendance of the dead found chiefly in the western areas. In Halbi, **dumaghar**.
kor-guda	Hen-roost.
lon, ghar (H), **kuriya** (CH)	A house.
lopa ahpi	Inner room.
nadum ahpi	Outer room. Also **parsār** (Ha).
pad-guda	Pig-sty.
racha	Courtyard. Also **angna** and **duār** (Ha).
sār, mandap (Ha)	Covered space in front of the house, where people sit to talk and work. On the roof, which is flat, grains and tobacco are dried. Called **chhauni** and **baithak** in Chhattisgarh.
thāli-korka	Cowshed. Halbi, **kotha**.
wija-dholi	Granary. Also **dhāba** (GK) and **kothi-gadiya** (Ha).

Liquor

barka (tumma)	Gourd to contain the sap of the sago palm.
gāra (tora)	The seed of the *bassia latifolia* tree.
gāra pich (tora pend)	Oil-cakes made after the oil has been expressed from the *bassia latifolia* seed. The oily waste is used by the motiari for massaging.
gorga dārango (salpi ras or mand)	The refreshing juice of the sago palm.
gorga goriya	The cut peduncle of the sago palm.
gorga marra (salpi rukh)	The palm *caryota urens*, Linn.
gotānj, bikor (akosa)	The bamboo hook that holds the ladder in place.
bāja (thāpa or dāng)	Bamboo ladder for climbing the palm.
handar, takil (chariya)	The basket which keeps the pot in place.
hind dārango	The fermented juice of the chhind palm (*phoenix sylvestris*).
hochāna (matwār holo)	To be intoxicated. A drunkard is **hoche (matwār)**. Trench gives **jhakhum**, to be dead drunk.
hurām, surām	A drink made by soaking mahua flowers in water.
iruh puyi, irpa pungār, irpa kuching	The corolla of the tree *bassia latifolia*.
irom, iruh, irpa (H. mahua)	The tree *bassia latifolia*, Roxb.
jib	The inverted bamboo cone used to strain beer.
landa, hurhār (GN)	The highly intoxicating beer, made of **gorra, gorānj** (GN) or **mandia** (Ha) *eleusine corocana.*, **nuka**, rice, **kohola** or **koera**, *panicum miliaceum*, or other small millets.
mada, arka (tumdi)	Pot placed permanently in position to catch the sap of the sago palm.
sukri (tikri)	Matting that protects the pot from wind and the droppings of birds.

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parās, kai-buriya (orki)	A small gourd ladle kept in the pot.
siti (kari or katki)	The leaf-pipe that directs the juice into the pot.

Love and Love-making

[192] The Muria are inarticulate on this subject. There seem to be few, if any, Gondi words to express emotional or abstract conceptions. They borrow from Halbi or Chhattisgarhi when they wish to do so.

bichār wātu (man, bane)	Desire.
girda ātor	To be in love.
girda kiyāna	To make love. *Girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'.
jugti bikti, mohini (H)	A love-charm. **Jugti** suggests an invisible being adept at playing conjuring-tricks, **yukti**, in the cause of love.
maya kiyāna	To love.
maya pirit, perem (H)	Love.

Marriage Ceremonies

beni pehchāna (beni guthto)	Tying the plaits.
bohala, chaura	Earthen platform below the booth.
dulha, dulhi (Ha)	The bridegroom and bride. It is curious that there are no Gondi words for this.
ghari wersāna, chawk	Pattern drawn on the **chaura platform**.
harpān pārin (samdhin bhet)	Formal greeting between mothers-in-law.
kalsa (Ha)	A decorated pot with a **diwa** lamp above it.
lagin, lagir	The final ceremony, the essential binding part of the rite.
mānda (Ha)	Marriage booth.
marmi, marming (bihao)	Marriage.
neyi rehāna (tel utrāto)	Anointing with oil from head to feet; making the oil come down.
neyi tarhāna (tel chaghāto)	Anointing with oil from feet to head; making the oil climb up.
pargeh, pargāw (Ha)	Ceremonial bringing in of the marriage party.
pārin johār (samdhi bhet)	Formal greeting between fathers-in-law.
pungār milichna	The betrothal, lit. 'Plucking the Flower'. Also called **talk dāyna** or 'Going to Beg' and **pungār kurki** or 'Seeing the Flower'. In Halbi **mahala** or **sagai**.
rupiyān payāna, karch yetāna	To pay or take the bride-price.
sikla karsana, tori usna (chikal mundi)	Bride and groom play in the mud together.
tika (H)	Ritual greeting of bride and groom by placing a mark on their foreheads.
torun (Ha)	String of mango leaves tied round the booth.

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RELATIONSHIPS

akomāma	Member of a different clan with whom a marriage can be contracted.
alda-balda, adal-badal (ulat-pulat)	The custom of changing one's ghotul partner frequently.
ange-nona, ange-harandu-nāt	The relation between **dewar** and **bhauji**, a youth and his elder brother's wife.
dādābhai, tamur-dādal (bhai-band)	Those who are related in the same clan, with whom it is not possible to marry.
gudamol, gudapāl	The cross-cousin marriage. **Guda** means 'nest', **mola** means 'price', and **pāl** means 'milk'. Thus the bride-price is kept inside the nest; the 'milk' that is given in one generation is repaid in the next.
jodidār	The tradition of ghotul fidelity.
kawāna māne, kawtik māne (hansi nāta)	The 'joking' relationship.
muriyāl sehāna	'The elder must not touch.' The 'avoidance' relationship.
pāri, biring, birid, pār (barag-bas or goti)	A clan-sept.
saga, samdhi-samdhin	The relationship between the parents of married persons. **Samdhi** is a contraction from Hindi **sambandhi**, connexion.

RELIGION

Adibhum (kālepur or tarpur)	The Lower World, not to be confused with Hell.
anga (pat deo)	A clan-god of special construction often employed for divination.
chutki (Ha)	To make magic by snapping the fingers.
deo (H)	A word of very wide application applied to any god or godling who interferes in human affairs.
dhur-bān (Ha)	A magic formula, a **mantra**.
doli (Ha)	A litter for carrying a god to festivals. Danteshwari Mai is usually represented in a litter.
gariya	Sacred stone.
gunia (H)	A magician with a knowledge of **guni**, magic charms. He may also be called **panjiyār**.
gutāl	A bamboo pole with peacock feathers.
gutta, khamām	Stakes to support flag-poles.
hanāl-gaita or hanagunda	Priest of the Departed.
hona kiyāna	'To make an egg-shell', to perform a **thua**, a ceremony which concentrates a disease or other evil into a moveable object which can then be removed from the village or house.
hath hurāna (supa dekhna)	To divine with a winnowing-fan.
hode (panguniha)	A warlock, practitioner of black magic.
hode hanār (pangunihin)	A witch.

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jhara phukna	To blow away evil or danger.
jol ungāna (jhulna jhulto)	Divination by swinging.
kanyang (kaniya)	A 'Maiden' or naiad believed to inhabit woods and streams.
kapād (Ha)	A 'magic door' made to trouble an enemy.
kāri hurāna, katiya hurāna	To divine with a broom.
kaser-gaita or **māti-gaita**	The Knife Priest or Earth Priest, also called **nel-gaita, bhum-gaita** or **mātiyār**, in attendance on the Village Mother.
lāt (Ha)	A flag-pole, to which is attached the emblem of the clan or village god.
mahapurub	Probably incorrectly derived on p. 180. The word must be the same as **mahaprabhu** (SKT), which means 'Great Master' and in Orissa is widely used as a title not only of the Supreme Being but of any leading deity.
mātal	A 'Mother', generally the Village Mother.
mat hiyāna	To give medicine.
mudiyal, muittor (dokara, dokari)	These words which mean Old Man or Old Woman are usually added to the names of the clan-gods. Thus the *form* of Lingo Pen is that of an Anga, and he himself is referred to as Lingo Mudiyal or Lingo Dokara.
Nadumbhum (mānjpur)	The Middle World, or Earth.
pālo	Sacred cloth.
pāti	A forest god.
pen	A god, generally clan-god.
pen-dhurwa	A priest in special attendance on an Anga. If he is expert in magic he may be called **pen-waddai.**
pen-pujāri or **pen-gaita**	A clan-priest.
pentishta	According to Glasfurd, two posts of unequal size near the road, erected before beginning anything new and meaning 'the first, the consecration'.
pitkur (Ha)	Sacrifice of blood from one's finger to a god.
Porrobhum (uparpur)	The Upper World, not to be confused with Heaven.
rau (Ha)	A hill demon.
rawar (gudi)	A shrine. **Pen-rawar** is a shrine of a clan-god. Shrines are often furnished with **hukur**, wooden spoons, **hepur gutte**, fans of wood or feathers, **kaser**, knives, **pen-kunda**, pots for cooking sacrificial meals, **chhatar** (H), umbrellas, **sawur** (ox-tail used as fan) and **tirsul**, a trident.
siraha or **leski**	A medium capable of being inspired by a god and of thus revealing his messages to mankind.
talla meilhāna (jhupna)	To shake the head in trance.
Tallur Muttai	Mother Earth.
tokāna	Divination by giving rice to chickens.

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SONGS AND DANCES

buting-ting	A mask dance.
dāka	Dance-step.
endanna	Dance.
hatto	Riddle.
kahka	Proverb.
kolān mudiyāl, kolān guru, gāyān, jokta	Leaders of the Pus Kolang dances.
lekna	Theme of a song.
leng	Tune.
pār	Drum-rhythm.
pāta	Song.
pāta oywāl	Singers.
pito	Story.
roche	Chorus, generally a variation on the **relo** motif.

STILT-FESTIVAL

bād	Pile of old stilts placed over the stone of Bhimul.
dito	Stilts.
dito-dandi	Stilt-pole.
dito-palk	Foot-rests attached to the stilt-poles.
jabān	Wooden pegs to keep the foot-rests in place.

SYNONYMS

aking-making	An 'echo-word' on **aking**, leaves; meaning any kind of jungle produce.
iruk-na-yer	'Water of mahua' for liquor.
kota sāmhar	'The long-tailed one' is used for **thāli**, a cow.
morsa	'A rope' is used instead of **tās**, a snake.
warreata	'The fear' is used for **burkāl**, a tiger.

TATTOOING

hale hawar (sallya dhup)	Resin of *boswellia serrata* sometimes used to make the ink.
suji, uji	Needles.
jaddān perek (jāda bija)	Castor seed used to make the ink.
kājar	Black tattoo ink.
khopa (kondi or theka)	The small pot to hold the ink.
nung neyi (tilli tel)	Oil of *sesamum indicum*, also used to make the ink.
singār kotle, anjela, doonka (H. godna)	Tattoo.

TREES, SHRUBS AND CREEPERS

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ala (salai)	*Boswellia serrata*, Roxb. The Muria use the fragrant gum-resin as an incense in sacrifice.

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amarbel (Ha)	*Cuscuda reflexa*, Roxb. In Hindi, **akāshbel,** a clinging creeper used as an emblem of close friendship.
berel (bar)	The banyan, *ficus bengalensis*, Linn.
bor-renga (bhoir)	*Ziryphus jujuba*, Lamk. The Muria use its wood for fuel and sometimes to make agricultural implements. The thorny branches are used for fencing. The fleshy drupe is eaten. Hence the riddle—'The daughter is beautiful, but the mother bites'.
chil, hikum	*Acacia concinna.*
dumel bito (polai)	*Alstonia veneriata.* The bark and roots are used to poison animals.
dundipipar	A variety of *ficus religiosa*, Linn.
garānj (karanji)	*Pongamia glabra*, Vent. Oil for lighting is expressed from the seeds; the waste is used in the ghotul for massage. The fruit is rather like a comb, whence the riddle—'A tree full of combs'.
gorga (salpi)	*Caryota urens*, Linn. For a full account, see pp. 53ff.
gunj (H)	*Abrus precatorius*, Linn. The bright red seeds are used as beads and as goldsmith's weights; crushed, they poison arrows.
harangi (sargi, sal)	*Shorea robusta*, Gaertn. The splendid **sāl,** one of the most valuable of India's timber trees, used everywhere for building, railway sleepers, tools. The Muria earn money by sawing and carting the wood. They eat the seeds and young leaves and use its resin as incense.
hindi (chhind)	The wild date-palm, *phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb. The leaves are used for mats and baskets, and for marriage-crowns. The fermented sugary sap is drunk.
iru, irpu (mahua)	*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. See p. 33.
ita (imli)	*Tamarindus indica*, Linn. The pods are used in making condiments.
jadda (aranda)	*Ricinus communis.*
kadam, kāreka (H)	*Anthocephalus cadumba*, Miq. The fruit is eaten by human beings as well as by birds and cattle.
kaka (harra)	*Terminalia chebula*, Retz. The myrabolams are used for tanning and many Muria get work collecting and preparing them for contractors.
kaner	*Nerium odorum*, the oleander, a poisonous shrub. The seeds were used to murder an unwanted husband in southern Bastar in 1940.
karandi (mokha)	*Schrebera swietenioides*, Roxb.
karāt (kāru)	*Sterculia urens*, Roxb. The ghost tree, so called because of its gaunt white trunk with branches leafless half the year.
kasi (khassi)	*Bridelia retusa*, Spreng.
kehla (dhāman)	*Grewia tilliaefolia*, Vahl. The tough elastic wood is used by the Muria for their carrying-poles and bows.
khairi, khair kuta (Ha)	*Acacia catechu*, Willd.

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kingeri (harsingri)	*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, Linn. Widely used in medicine by the aboriginals. Buffaloes like scratching themselves against the scabrous leaves. The fragrant flowers are popular with the motiari.
kohoka (bhilwan)	*Semecarpus anacardium*, L.F. The marking-nut tree. The Muria eat the seeds. For the use of the juice as a counter-irritant see Codrington.
kumur (kumi)	*Celastrus paniculata*, Willd.
kurru, kalmodia (kurlu)	*Gardenia latifolia*, Ait. A small shrub of xerophytic habit.
kursi (siuna)	*Gmelina arborea*, Linn. The fruit, a succulent ovoid drupe, is eaten by chelik and motiari.
mahka (bel)	*Aegle marmelos*, Correa. The tree is sacred to Hindus. The Muria use the fruit ceremonially as a substitute for the coconut.
mang (kahu)	*Terminalia arjuna*, Bedd.
mard (adan, saja)	*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A. The tree sacred to the Gond throughout central India.
marka (ām)	*Mangifera indica*, Linn. The mango.
mughori (palāś or pharsa)	*Butea frondosa*, Roxb. The 'Flame of the Forest'. Rope is spun from its root fibres; plates and cups are made from the leaves; important in the lac industry.
nali (aonra)	*Phyllanthus emblica*, Linn. The handsome wax-like fruit, which is very astringent, is valued as a stomach medicine. The leaves and branches are important demon-scarers.
nemum (shisham)	*Dalbergia latifolia*, Roxb. Indian rosewood.
nendi (jāmun)	*Eugenia jambolana*, Lam. The black plum.
pahur (siāri)	*Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A. The camel's-foot creeper. The large leaves of this gigantic creeper are used as plates and for thatching. The Muria make rope from the fibre.
phundar	*Calotropis gigantea*, R.Br. A shrub with a milky juice.
pipir, ali (pipar)	*Ficus religiosa*, Linn. The most sacred tree in India, but not specially honoured by the Muria.
raka (chār)	*Buchanania lanzan*, Spreng. The fruit, which is like a plum, is coated with sugar and sold as the **chironji** sweet.
amaltas (Ha)	*Cassia fistula*, Linn. A beautiful tree bearing clusters of golden flowers.
tika (behara)	*Terminalia belerica*, Roxb. The fruit is rapidly devoured by animals.
sāgon (Ha)	*Tectona grandis*, Linn. The teak, the most important timber tree in India, famous in ship construction and for many other uses.
tirka (mākar tendu, menju)	*Diospyros embryopteris*, Pers. The fruit, which is rich in tannin, is eaten by monkeys.
toya (dumar)	*Ficus glomerata*, Roxb. The wild fig.
tumir (tumra, tendu)	*Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb. The ebony tree, important in magic. The berries are a useful food.
turmara, tongundia (tilai)	*Wendlandia exserta*, D.C.

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vedur (bans)	The bamboo, *dendrocalamus strictus*, Nees. The young shoots are a great delicacy. The seeds are also eaten and the pith, **vedur-jiwa** or 'soul of the bamboo', is valued.
walek (semur)	*Bombax malabaricum*, D.C. The cotton tree, used ceremonially by many tribes in peninsular India.
wengor (bija)	*Pterocarpus marsupium*, Roxb. The Sanskrit **asana** tree. Very important for timber. The red gum-resin is mentioned in the Lingo legend.

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[For comparison of the ghotul (communal dwelling) and its features, with those in other cultures, see category 116, pp. 269-320.]

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/For travel by ghotul members in the form of ceremonial dancing "expeditions" to neighboring villages, see category 116, pp. 485-520/

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[For information on the ghotul and the activities of its members, see category 116, pp. 269-682.]